

Jack-in-the pulpit

By A.G.S.





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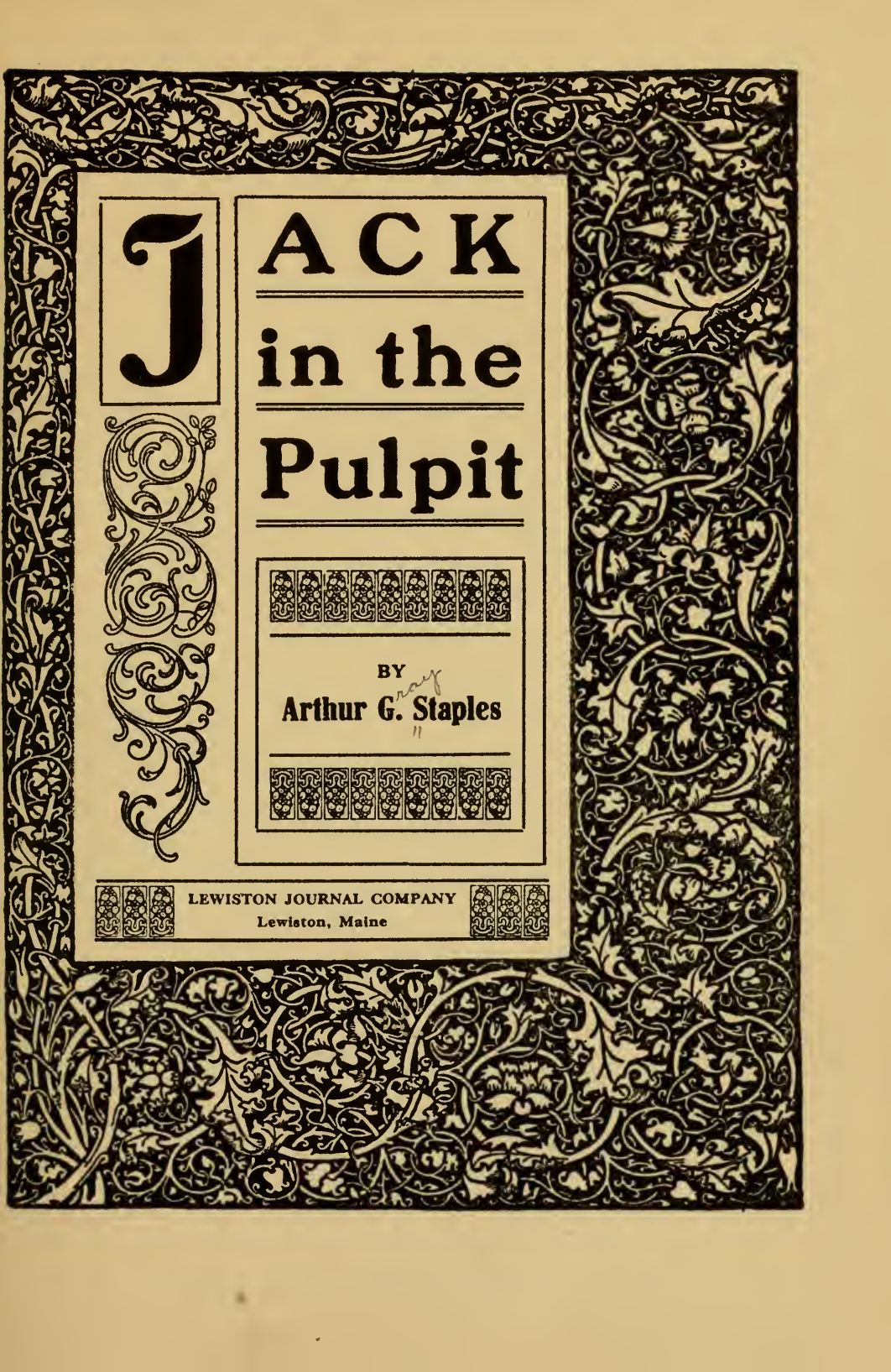
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A. G. Staples



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ACK
in the
Pulpit



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Arthur G. Staples
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Invocation

Let no one say that this book asks from the reader more than it merits. It is a collection of familiar essays, one of which has been published, each day, for four years in the newspaper of which the writer is the editor. The subjects are all next door to each of us. Such morals are drawn as seem appurtenant. If no moral be indicated, the reader may perhaps find one in the text; and sometimes there may be no moral at all—only a smile or the revival of a latent memory.

Jack in the Pulpit is a modest flower that grows in the deeper woods. It is loved by children. We used to hunt it out and make the little preacher bow and speak his piece while the sunlight played in the trees and the summer was bright and gay.

This is the plan of this collection of essays. It has no notion of preaching except as one loves and loses himself in the subjects treated, the scenes delineated and the memories revived. And when one gets to that point in writing, he need not preach at all.

Arthur G. Staples

Contents

Chapter	Page
ON "THE INFLUENZA"	3
ON "BENDS IN RIVERS"	5
ON "THE MARKS ON THE DOOR JAMB"	7
ON "YOUTH"	10
ON "PUMPS—ESPECIALLY CHAIN-PUMPS"	13
ON "THANKSGIVING DAYS"	16
ON "READING ALOUD"	19
ON "OLD TIME TORCHLIGHT PROCESSIONS"	25
ON "MY AUNT'S MILLINERY SHOP"	28
ON "A RIDE TO BATH"	31
ON "THE QUALMS OF GOLF"	35
ON "STILTS"	38
ON "MY BEST UMBRELLA"	41
ON "A SERMON ON THE SEED"	44
ON "THE FIRST FROSTS"	47
ON "AN OLD BASEBALL STORY"	50
ON "YOUR FIRST TROUSERS"	53
ON "THE SPECTRES IN OUR PATH"	56
ON "CO-OPERATION AFTER A FASHION"	59
ON "HAVING NOTHING TO DO"	62
ON "SOME OLD NEWSPAPERS"	65
ON "BACK TO THE OLD SCHOOL"	68
ON "SPRING AND DAISIES"	71
ON "PEONIES"	74
ON "THE VALUE OF CHARACTER"	77
ON "THE LITTLE VILLAGE"	80
ON "A PERSONAL MATTER"	83
ON "THE ETIQUETTE OF SWIMMIN'"	85
ON "GOING BERRYING"	88
ON "THE OLD PEDDLER'S CART"	91
ON "THE VAGABOND"	94
ON "MY FIRST JACKKNIFE"	97
ON "OLD TIME BREAKING OUT OF THE ROADS"	100

Chapter	Page
ON "WHEN THE MINISTER CAME"	103
ON "THE PUSSY WILLOW"	106
ON "CARVING ONE'S FIRST TURKEY"	109
ON "ABRAHAM AND LOT"	112
ON "THE OLD BRICK OVEN"	115
ON "A LITTLE BUCK UP STORY"	118
ON "NOAH"	121
ON "THE ELM TREE"	124
ON "HOW I TIRED OF FARMING"	127
ON "THE SMELL OF A BRUSH FIRE"	130
ON "GHOSTS AND SUCH"	133
ON "CHURCH DINNERS"	136
ON "THE CROWS IN THE SKY"	139
ON "DRIVING HOME THE COW"	142
ON "LAST DAYS OF SCHOOL"	145
ON "OLD MAIDS"	148
ON "CAMP FIRES"	151
ON "GOING TO THE MOVIES"	154
ON "PRODIGIES"	157
ON "CERTAIN NOISES"	160
ON "GRAVES BY THE RIVER"	162
ON "GRANDFATHER'S CLOCKS"	165
ON "SOPSEY-VINES"	168
ON "AN OLD NOTION OF WAR'S ENDING"	171
ON "WHAT OUR FATHERS READ"	174
ON "THE SLEEPING CHILD"	178
ON "THE CAVERN OF THE SNAIL"	181
ON "FALL PICKLING"	184
ON "WOODLAND POOLS"	187
ON "AMIABILITY AT HOME"	190
ON "A WOMAN HANGING OUT THE CLOTHES"	193
ON "THE CLAM"	195
ON "SAND"	198
ON "FORMING ONE'S PERSONALITY"	201
ON "GRANNIE"	204
ON "HELPING THE BOY"	207
ON "SHADOWS"	210
ON "THE LESSON IN THE RAINBOW"	213
ON "HAIR AND HEADS"	216

CONTENTS

xv

Chapter	Page
ON "A TALK TO CHILDREN OF ALL AGES"	219
ON "RACE SUICIDE"	222
ON "CLEARING OFF AFTER STORMS"	225
ON "REFORMING AS A BUSINESS"	228
ON "RESOURCEFULNESS"	231
ON "WOODCHUCKING"	234
ON "HAVING THE LUMBAGO"	237
ON "FACES WAITING AT THE WINDOW"	240
ON "ADVICE TO REPORTERS"	243
ON "EATING YEAST"	246
ON "THE MAINE OF 100 YEARS"	248
ON "SAP-BOILING TIME"	251
ON "THE FIRST CROW"	254
ON "GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL"	257
ON "THE CHIMNEY CORNER"	261
ON "SULPHUR AND MOLASSES"	264
ON "HAVING A SYSTEM"	267
ON "AN OLD TEXT"	270
ON "RIBBON GRASS"	273
ON "MY ALARM CLOCK"	276
ON "AUTUMN IN THE CELLAR"	279
ON "RIDING IN SMOKING CARS"	282
ON "COBWEBS"	285

JACK IN THE PULPIT



ON "THE INFLUENZA"



DOC'S been here agen terday! Seem's ez ef he come ter say "How yer gettin' on terday?" lookin' at me where I lay.

I ain't talkin' over much; ain't no need ter air my lore. Eyes a burnin' where they be; ears a bustin' with a roar; mouth thet's like a shingle-mill; dry's the handle of a pump; back that's broke square in two 'bout four inches 'bove the rump! So I ain't so long on talk. Got no answer fer the doc!

Doc don't seem ter mind me none; sets around a little bit; pulls a little dictaphone; lays it on my kroop-er-bone; makes me breathe and holler "A-a-ah"; breathe an' intake; breathe an' groan through his little dictaphone.

Sez he after quite a spell, "Them Bolsheveeks is raisin' hell! D'yer think ol' Wilson's doin' well?" Takes my temperatoor agen; thumps me on the abdomen. "Think it's goin' ter snow agen?"

But I don't want no casual chat. I don't call no doc, fer that. Got no call for Bolsheveeks, fer at least a couple er weeks! Don't keer ef it snows an' snows ef I could only blow my nose! I want facks! Right off'n the bat! I don't want no social chat! Ef I'm wusn't what I wuz, what's the reason; what's the cause? What's the status of the case; tell the facks right to my face; lemme know the wust and best; is my innards all congested; are there bones loose in my pate; is my backbone dislocate; ef I ain't got no temperatoor an' no disease fer sure, what in time's ther howdydoo ef 'tain't the pip and 'tain't the flu?

Doc he sets around a bit. "Man!" says he, "you're lookin' fit! Have you fightin' Dempsey yit."

Then I looks doc in the eye: "Tie the bull outside," says I. "Doc, I bleeve I'm goin' ter die. I'm dead now above my chin! Eyes and nose and ears all in! Ain't breathed reglar fer a week! Jints all movin' with a squeak. Every time I move my jaw, feel's ez though I'd broke the law. Doc," says I, "it's up ter you! Ef t'aint the pip and 'tain't the flu how yer goin' ter pull me through?"

Doc he sets an' thinks erwhile; then he answers with a smile, "Aint you the chap wrote a talk, couldn't eat and couldn't walk, waitin' fer the birds to sing, an' the comin' of the spring; wanted to loaf by a larfin' stream, set an' fish an' fish an' dream, nuthin' but bees an' bugs an' things, thet live right where the wild stream sings. Maybe that ain't jest carreck, but 'sumthin' at least to that effect." An' the doc he opens a bag he lugs. "What you need," sez he, "is a dose of bugs."

An' sure enough I'm gettin' well; ain't felt so peart for quite a spell. Wuz over a billion bugs, they say, in the shot doc gimme the other day. Reely feel I'm comin' to; 'tain't the pip an' 'tain't the flu; but jest er case where all I need is sumthin' off'n the flowery mead, an' when you can't inject the Spring nor a dose of blue-bird on the wing, nor brooks that run, ner vi'lets blue ter cure the pip er cure the flu, why! the next best thing the doctor lugs is a shot of erbout a billion bugs. An' as they sort o' crawl eround, I can somehow feel I'm on the ground, with all the rest that my fancy hugs, the birds an' the bees an' the billion bugs.

ON "BENDS IN RIVERS"



IT SEEMS there are dreams and strange fantasies in them; drifting into Elysium; the coming suddenly upon new countries, exploration and achievement—all in the bends of calm rivers in June.

I see them as we ride by them this dawn of a motionless day, no wind whatever and this river of ours as still and silent as though it were viscid. They are, perhaps, the most inviting things in the world. This river could not be more enticing were it the Congo or the Amazon. I watch it from the car windows and wish I could pass by these bends of rivers and study their shores as *terra incognita*.

There is something in still waters in June and paddling on them, especially around the bendings of winding streams, that attracts every person. We read tales of explorers. No book more fascinating than "Westward Ho," with its adventure. And of all adventure nothing like adventuring up new and great rivers. And it is always the lure of what is beyond the bend. Mystery lies there. What strange monsters, what beast or bird or what manner of fish be just around the bend, all these are the lure that makes the bendings of rivers so alluring.

This morning the river mirrored every tree. The sky floated in it. The shore boulders, the ferns, the spruces—all rested on the surface. It seemed as though never before did this river meander as today. It stretched like a silver thread from town to town and around tiny islands and into bayous and odd retreats. The thought was not original with me, that we would like to drift around the bends in the river. Others

suggested it; so that it must be a very general sentiment—a natural emotional attitude of man—this desire to follow rivers; to drift around their bendings; to see what lies beyond.

The very obvious suggestion is that this is the way in life. I might make a commonplace application of the thought; but I will not weary you. My thought as I press my face against the windows of the railroad train and see this absolutely placid river is not solely moral. It is rather emotional and aesthetic. I can't tell you why it makes me sad for departed youth, for Junes long past. I cannot tell you why, as I close my eyes, I seem barefoot, alone, running through brambles to the river or the brook, a young explorer. I cannot tell you why my mind encompasses the years, as the day encompasses my experience since then, and I see the reaches of men's coming and going and see tides broiling, sea-gulls flying, tall ships moving and long, wide bays suddenly breaking upon my view.

We New Englanders have no conception of what we owe to the lakes, ponds, streams, estuaries of our native domain. We have but to go into the inland, where sluggish rivers move if at all, dark and discolored, and where there are no clear-water lakes or ponds like those that we have here by the thousands. No wonder that a Maine river in June attracts even us. No wonder that we long for them when away; dream of them by night and in half waking hours float around their bendings and see new lands as they come to view. The Lord was very kind when He made New England rivers. Never straight, never severe, but always sinuous, curved, in lines of beauty and always appealing to our sense of mystery. The Lord is very good in making us desire to see what is beyond the river bend.

ON "THE MARKS ON THE DOOR-JAMB"



VERY New Year at least, they used to measure little boys to see how much they had grown in the past twelve months. On the old door-jamb in the kitchen or on some smooth boarded place therein, were the marks of the growth of children, pathetic reminders of passing youth and coming years and records to linger over of what has been but may never be any more.

I recall the ceremony. "Come, sonny," said dad, "stand up here and let us see where all this good food has gone to. Let's see how much more boy we've got this year than we had last." And so we toddled over to the appointed place all marked up with records of previous growers of our family and at the place marked with my initials I stood while the blade of a case-knife was laid along the top of my little frowsly head and the scratch was made in the paint that marked my new height in the world of little men. I can see dad now as he gave a mighty jab of the handle of the knife so that the dull blade sank into the wood and left the records of the day thereon. And then it was dated and measured and left for the ages.

I think that maybe there are such records nowadays, but I doubt it. I have asked several persons if they have any such memory and they have not recalled any. But I have them and I can see the row of scratches on the door-jamb in the old kitchen and can still marvel at the monstrous climb of the marks of the passing years toward altitude of senescence. Some such marks stopped and never went on. In one family

that I used to visit there were several boys and girls and among them was the record of growth of a boy who was drowned and whom we all saw dragged out of the water one evening in summer and with whose brother I went home, wondering as he sobbed. I can fancy mothers looking at these marks as they scrubbed the door-way paint and pausing to think of the little babies, the chubby boys and the romping girls. Nothing that the mother would not rather yield up to time than the growth of her babies. Often mothers would tie them to their breasts and under their breasts for all time if they could, and yet the toil is so great! But wee children about the house make it full of joy, and when they are gone the house is full of ghosts of flying forms that are no more even tho they live in name.

I recall, however, peculiar pride in the evidences of growth, possibly because they were so few. I recall well—and it is a story I often tell to little folks—of the times when I used to go to visit my grandfather at the farm, he would call me over to weigh me. The only scales were a set of long steelyards with a heavy, sliding weight on them that would go rippling down the notches if a boy tried to handle them. They were used to weigh everything from the pig to the carpet-rags. They were like those the tin-peddler used in his negotiations of such lengthy concern and so potent in results as to domestic peace. Mother was very particular not to let the peddler get the better of her trade and usually needed a good deal of bolstering afterwards to calm her doubts.

Grandfather would call me over and grandmother would suggest that the "little creeter" be fed up a bit

before "Pa" weighed him or he might not start the steelyards at all. He used to tie a piece of broomstick firmly into the hook of the steelyards and call me to grab the stick, and then with a swing off the floor in his strong old arms I would float in the air like a sparerib and they would gather around and discuss the quarters of pounds or the balance of the steelyards while I hung there in mid-air. I remember but one weight that was recorded in connection with this and I think it rather curious as a common theme, that this figure should endure; for it must have been a good many years ago. That weight was thirty-five pounds. I was very proud of that thirty-five pounds. I reckoned it was thirty-five pounds of good fighting weight; for that was what I was advised that it was by my grandfather on the side as we talked it over subsequently in the barn after he had done his chores and we stood a while to talk it over as to the prospects of a boy's behavior for the coming summer.

I would like to know what those marks on the door-jambs, what those fugitive weights of small boys really are. I have speculated before on what becomes of the boy and what bourne receives the boy-soul and the little girl soul and what is I and what was that little boy that once was I and what the distance between the marks on the door-jamb really amount to in our lives. They are gone, those years and that growth, and yet not gone. And if gone, where? And if not gone, what of the boy or girl that once was you? Tell me these things and I'll tell you about our growth into Heaven.

ON "YOUTH"



RECENTLY at a wedding in one of the loveliest colonial houses in New England the wedding party sat about the table in the dining room toasting the bride.

The day was fair and the colors of the wedding gaiety were those of autumn. I am not very good on naming colors but these were ruddy and deep-toned like those of gardens of autumn by the sea, where the colors are always more intense and vivid. The bridesmaids, twelve or more, were like the flaming bush. And the bride was like the picture that I used to see in Grimm's Fairy Tales—the Sleeping Princess just as she had come wide awake and all of the castle had awakened, from the princess to the boy who had fallen asleep, turning the spit, in the great kitchen. Here in this colonial dining room deep, long and high, were festoons of color and festival array, in the middle of which arose from the table the wedding cake all silvery white like the crest of the Himalayas.

It was difficult to get into the room, so many had crowded in to see the ceremony of toasting the bride—and yet the entrance thereto was limited to the younger set. There were many ushers, and the best man, and the bridegroom and some of the young friends of all of them. I, being of gray hair, stood outside and looked in with a lot of other gray-beards who saw and thought. Over in the farther end of the room the doors were guarded by two handsome matrons in gowns whose colors were foils to each other and they stood with their backs to the wall, one on each side of the portal, like warders at the entrance to the Tower of London,

and somehow fitted into the picture as tho it had been arranged by a Belasco.

Toasting the bride is lovely as a spectacle. There was a background of young college men—and they sang songs of Old Eli. Crowding around the bridal party they lifted their glasses—I don't know with what the glasses were filled, for in this day of near-drinks, I am a poor judge of distance—but the glasses shone and the ceremony looked like pictures that I have seen of "Enter the King." Hymen was the king that day and I saw it all with some thought of things that I am hoping to express.

Near me were two of my old school teachers. One was 84 years old, a teacher of my boyhood in Bath, Maine. The other is equally along in years and both of them endowed with minds as keen as ever and with a spirituality that has sweetened and refined with the passing of the years.

I leave the contrast to you. Outside the door—age! Inside the door—"Youth." And I said: "I wish I were an artist and were commissioned to paint a gay picture of Youth. Here I would have my model. The straining eyes of age outside the doors looking in on this picture seen thru the streaming light of the November sun with all of its color and joyousness. The flowers, the wedding finery, the lovely maidens, the gallant boys, the songs of college, the glasses lifted high, the wedding-cake silvered and uncut, the matrons at the door, the mother in the background, so tenderly considerate of parental giving; so hopeful of the future; so traditional of the past.

Youth! Well, it comes and it goes and it leaves stranded on the shoals of time everything save two elements supreme—the spirit and the memories. Love

endureth and the spirit grows greater with the years. Time is—and very little else is. And youth recreates itself and age passes out of the presence of the festival and stands outside. And yet age revels in youth as in nothing else and determines that it shall have its day.

In the eyes of my two old ladies there were tears, not of sadness but of participation. Probably they, too, will carry long with them to the last the picture of the open room and Youth triumphant. To me it always incarnates the spirit of life itself, the coming, the going of that endless procession.

“With firm, regular step,” says Walt Whitman, “they wend—they never stop, successions of men, one generation playing its part and passing on; another generation playing its part and passing on in its turn, with faces turned towards me to listen; with eyes retrospective toward me.” Yes, Youth. And never shall I forget the scene so full of it, so incomparably beautiful in its loveliness and innocence.

ON "PUMPS—ESPECIALLY CHAIN-PUMPS"



UMPS are several kinds, chain-pumps, blue-pumps, kitchen-pumps, detectives and dancing.

When the ark leaked on its first voyage, there was no pump on hand, so the elephant put into use the original pump and kept the ark dry. He could suck the water out of the hold and squirt it out of the window. There is no mention of the pump in Scripture. The Red Sea was parted by the wind; not pumped dry by Moses. All kinds of shipwreck occur in the biblical tales but no evidence that the pump was used to amuse the sailors while they drowned.

The first historical account of a pump is Hero's account of the force pump of Ctesibusus of Alexandria. That is as far as I am going into the history of the pump. I never liked the pump anyway. I remember the days of the old chain-pump, when the efforts of a person in getting water enough to wash his face as far as his ears in the frosty morning could be heard several miles. I have gone out to the slippery well-curb, where a chain pump lay in wait for the unwary with a mound of gleaming ice spreading over the territory, and I have had the most terrible conflicts with that pump that I ever had with any animate or inanimate object in my life. In the first place it would be frozen up tighter than a mill-pond. Then the well would be frozen over. And then the chain would be frozen and then my ears would be frozen, and then, every time I

tried to turn the crank, my hands would freeze to the handle and then I would slip and turn a double-somersault on the well-curb and loop up over the pump and get mixed into the chain and get my hair frozen into the atmosphere and fall down the well and cut my lip on the pail and possibly lose my temper.

Of all of the cursed-looking insignificant instruments of Satan a chain-pump in winter had them all skun to a bare fact. You had to thaw it out with hot water first. I have spent years of my valuable time as a boy thawing out chain-pumps. They would freeze even in summer. The only night of the year when I felt reasonably sure that our chain-pump would not freeze, was the night before the Fourth of July and possibly one or two sultry nights in summer when we boys slept, in puris naturalibus, in the old open attic and heard the crickets sweating blood outdoors. There WERE a few of those hot nights as I recall in which the chain-pump only just skimmed over and we could easily break the ice on the August morning.

After you had thawed out a chain-pump, the next thing was to induce it by muscular artifice to give up well-water. It had a way of pulling the water part way up and then sticking just there. You wound and you wound; you speeded up; you threw off your outer vestments; your tongue began to hang out; your head began to buzz; your breath began to come in knickerbockers; you tore at the job; the well began to tremble; the pump began to dance over the premises, and just as the water was beginning to flow out of the spout into the pail amid the terrifying racket, why—you slipped on the ice or your wind gave out and you had to begin all over again.

Another pleasant habit of a chain-pump was to arrive at the point of delivering water and then break the chain. I suppose I have fished more hours for a chain in a well than any other one thing I ever did as a boy. You know that a chain-pump is made of a chain—thank heaven, they are now obsolete—that ran over a sprocket and up through a spout that just about fitted the chain. The agitation of the sprocket by a boy was supposed to be sufficient to induce the water to come up and flow. If you broke the chain—well, I don't care to talk about it. I have fished for well-chains on days when there was perfectly good fish-fishing, and I don't care to endanger my present good disposition by recurring to it. I am going to leave the chain in the well today.

Of course this world is one of progress. I have been saying that for some years. I never am so convinced of it as I am every time I turn a faucet and consider how different it is from a chain-pump or even an old-fashioned pumpkin-wood pump. We always painted the pump blue! Every farmer boy was long on blue paint. I never knew why blue paint was so plentiful in childhood. Red paint has been dear enough since; but blue paint! We had slathers of it and we loved to paint. We painted the barn-doors, the front steps, the clothes reel, the fence, the pump, the rooster on the weather vane, the rain-water barrel by the back-door, the roll-way doors to the cellar-way, the back-door, the pig-pen, the hen-coop and the dog-house—all blue. Bright blue, too. But I don't know that it ever made me care any more fondly for the pump than usual. I remember the distance it stood from the evening fire; the cold pathway; the slipperiness of its approach; the racking pull on a boy's arms.

Yea! Verily! The world is easier for boys, now. What would Percival say now to going to the pump for all of the water! But just the same, there was a triumph in getting the better of a chain-pump that nothing else can equal. Verily, the chief joy of life is in accomplishment and the greatest happiness is in work.

ON "THANKSGIVING DAYS"




SOMEHOW, every time I think of Thanksgiving days, I see an old-fashioned country dooryard, with a single wheel rut in it, marking the passage of the family wagon over the new-fallen snow. And standing in the door is a woman in an apron, the apron folded up over her bare arms, and looking off over the white hills. If I were drawing a picture of Thanksgiving, it would be that—mother in the doorway waiting for the boy from town.

I would step in with you for a time as she closes the door and we shall see the house and smell the dinner. It has been furbished up as well as it ever could be, as clean as mother alone could make it; and every tidy on the chairs and every pillow on the beds, and every hair-cloth chair in the parlor is as straight as her hands could make it. The yellow kitchen floor shines and the old clock ticking resolutely on and on, in the corner, has a clean if battered face and no need to hide behind its hands. The light of the Thanksgiving Day sun falls on the floor and makes squares of light from the window panes. The cat sleeps on the braided rug by the kitchen stove. Things are going

well. The turkey is doing nicely and is being basted with regularity; for mother has nothing more to do than to wait nervously and watch with infinite care lest things go wrong. Every time the oven-door is opened, the steam comes out and makes a savor that defies the art of Savarin. The pantry has bubbling pies of mince on the dressers. The table has an unaccustomed white linen cloth already placed. The best pickle jar is in the center and the best castor near at hand. And what is that? The silver butter dish, by all that is holy! Mother looks at it fondly and believes that she will even get out her best napkins. Yes, by Jupiter, she will and does; and even so with a look of determination and a smile of mischief she cuts loose with the best the family has or ever expects to have. What is the use of living if you cannot do a few extras on Thanksgiving? Why be eternally keeping the best for the minister?

How slowly the clock ticks! How calmly and irrevocably Time does have its way! Again and again mother goes to the window and looks down the quiet country road. It turns just at the bottom of the hill toward the "Corner" where Father went to the store and thence to the station for the incoming train. It is four miles away from the turn in the road. The Wilsons are expecting "folks." Their chimney smokes beatifically into the sunlit skies this Thanksgiving Day. She sees Father in the old wagon, driving slowly through this early snow, with a happy look on his face and her heart warms to him and she fancies things of youth about him and remembers all of the other Thanksgiving Days that they have had here when the children were at home.



And so she goes back and busies herself and looks at herself in the looking-glass and opens the oven-door and turns the turkey around in the baking pan and gives it a chance for a little extra brown. This is all a part of giving thanks—this infinite care as to the nicety of the dinner. It is all that she can do, by the way. And yet Father considers that all of this must be very trifling to the son who has been living in a great city. But maybe mother knows quite as well as he.

I can hear the wheels coming far down the road, and can even hear the conversation between the man and the son. Maybe mother can hear it, or could hear it, if her heart were not beating so wildly. She will hardly go to the window; she will hardly go to the door. Perhaps he rather see her just as he used to see her, when he was a little boy—just busy about the kitchen and all seeming so homelike. And so! the door opens with a rush of eager air and a boy springs into the room and the cat jumps from the braided rug and the old clock ticks a bit louder or seems to halt, and father stands in the doorway with an expectant and proud look and the little mother is enfolded in the strong young arms and her head goes to its haven where it has longed to be and he says "Little Mamma" and they wipe away the tears of joy. That's Thanksgiving.

And that's what makes this old world go along! Nothing else but this eager hunger for the love of our own, the happiness of our own, the uprightness and the constancy of our own. And any boy or girl who can come home to that kitchen fireside and be proud of it; and who can look into the mother's eyes and not flinch, has cause to lift his heart in thanks to Him from whom floweth all mercy and all thanksgiving.

ON "READING ALOUD"



LITERATURE began before books were printed. The Arabian Nights are a collection of tales told around the evening camp fire in the deserts and handed down by tale-tellers. Homer was brought along by men who recited it in the original Greek with indescribable grandeur. People thus cultivated the art of listening, which is rapidly passing. The speaking stage has begun to go and people gather in darkened houses to see. They are not so inclined to hear. It is almost an insult in the average family to ask the young people to listen to the reading of anything. They begin to yawn and look about for escape. It usually comes by the way of the telephone which jangles its rude interruptions and the doorbell that admits the caller uninvited.

I would advocate the return to the old habit of reading aloud. I find in daily life that there is a very great decline in the art of direct expression. Fewer people are able today to tell a story simply and directly. Schools of salesmanship are instituted to teach salesmen how to sell goods. I saw in a Boston bookseller's, Wednesday, three samples of conversations that the salesmen were to use in selling a set of the works of Jules Verne. I was asked to read them to give my opinion as to which were the better. It seemed inconceivable that the booksellers should take this care to teach men what to say; to have them learn it by rote. I chose the shorter.

No other means, equal to reading aloud, is at hand to teach a person expression and speech. It is astonishing what definite progress can be made in a short

time by the cultivation of this family practice. I recall that John Stuart Mill, who was educated by his father and who never went to school as a boy until he went away to the Paris Sorbonne, was educated by reading aloud chiefly. You may ask if John Stuart Mill came to know anything by this method, and I will say he was the most astonishing prodigy of all history. He did not know at the age of fourteen that he was better educated than other boys, so simply had the process come about, but he had all of the knowledge of books that the average person of fifty years could have, speaking and reading all languages, all classics, all as well as his own native English. We may teach children the most wonderful of things by setting aside a certain portion of each day or week for reading aloud.

Interruptions! I have already spoken of them and it is not easy to shut off the telephone talker on the other end, with the usual lot of unnecessary verbiage at his command. But it can be done—if one will be firm and respectful. Much depends on the time and the place. Some places in some houses lend themselves to reading. There are quiet nooks where you may find the atmosphere essential to reading aloud. The book is your own business, but I would not read cheap fiction or useless matter. I would follow the line of good reading or not at all. It must be interesting, connected, engrossing as may be. Reading of fiction is the most satisfactory and I will defy any person to follow the habit of reading aloud and not find speedily that his speech is clearer, his voice more elastic and musical; his power to hold an audience if he ever desires to do any public speaking, more certain; his appreciation of polite and agreeable phrase more keen.

You say this is all very well. This is not my business. But it happens to be your business. Every man is a salesman. He is selling himself to the public. It matters not what his vocation, if he can talk accurately, express himself clearly, use decent English, talk rationally without slang and without the use of phrases that mean nothing and are of no strength to his story, he will go farther and do better even if his present occupation be digging in the ditch.

One of the best talkers that I ever heard is a shoemaker in one of our shops. He comes in here occasionally. He is a most conclusive and able talker. I asked him if he did not read aloud evenings and Sundays to his family. Said he, "That's the way I have learned all I know. We read aloud in my household nearly every evening. I take the children young and bring them up that way and we all take our turns at it."

I do not know how much reading is taught in schools now. I have no interest in elocution as such, in this comment—excellent as it may be. This is a plea for the direction of reading in households by those who have a concern for the proper education of all. Reading aloud is almost a lost art. It should be restored.

ON "OLD LADIES WITH SWEET FACES"



NE OF THEM came in the other day to see me and tell me some things that I should know and I was pleased to sit at her feet, as one sat in days of old at the feet of Gamaliel.

I know of nothing lovelier than an old lady with a sweet face. Some of them yet retain the flush of color in their cheeks, the dancing light in their eyes, the subtle humor of experience in their talk and the gentleness of the Kingdom of God in their attitude. And some are wrinkled, alas! and have hard hands creased by work; and yet, if there is the look of sweetness in the eyes and in the face, all is again loveliness.

I reckon that if you have any sentiment in your souls there is some dear old lady whom these words call again back to you as you read. She may have passed on but she yet peoples your mind. She sits by some window sewing; she tells little children her quaint old tales; she sits silent and dreamful looking out on the familiar scenes. She is there—all of the time.

This dear old lady with the sweet face came in to see me the other day because she said that she wanted to see how the chap looked that wrote a piece that she had read about "Youth." We had the nicest time that you ever saw and, when she went away, she said, "I must not talk to you any more of these old-time things or you will be putting me in the paper."

Said I, "I wish I could put into the paper, not what you said but what you mothers of mothers of mothers,

typify. You are a great, great grandmother—as you have said. I wish I could put what that means into a newspaper.” I wish I could impress on all this world what it means to embody motherhood through the generations—mother to one’s own, mother to one’s daughter’s or one’s son’s own; mother, then, to the sons and daughters of their children. I wish I could tell the world what triviality there is in all of this fol-de-rol of ill-considered reform work, of half-baked Americanization schemes, of these costly systems to bring Utopias by revolutions and force-majeure, when all that is needed is a succession of good mothers, teaching children good things at their knees—and I care not in what language it is taught, by what religion it is measured, under what flag it is folded, so long as motherhood is sweet and good and childhood goes the way of the street called straight. O! You can’t make everyone over to suit your pattern. You and I don’t wear the same size breeches or the same cut of coat nor do we like the same sort of food; but if we like the same sort of a God, the same sort of humanity, the same sort of heaven on earth and have the same sort of an appreciation of love of neighbor and kindness to all men and women, good or bad, rich or poor, we shall be bringing motherhood to our hearts and kissing the lips that responded to our touch in days gone by.

I cannot keep my hands off the shoulders or away from patting the hands of ladies of sweet faces who are over eighty. I do not dare to be more forward with those under eighty and over seventy. They are positively the loveliest things on God’s green earth or in the heavens that bend, save the stars and the empyrean.

They treasure memories that thrill. They are all polished like the facets of the diamond that gets its light from hard rubs. I lived with one for years, a second mother, who combined all that makes angels into humans and who, with her like, should never pass on to make angels again out of the flesh, until all who so love them have passed beyond the stage of missing them.

Again—and finally what is it, dear friends, that makes the world go on and on? I have told you what I think about it, over and over again. It is what I see in the faces of old ladies who are motherly and sweet. It is what we hear in their cooings over children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is what the dove sings in the nest; what the heart sings when it sees the chimney-smoke rising in welcome; what the soul sings when it prays for better things for other souls. “I do not know why I am kept here,” said my dear old lady, “I think it may be for some good; at least my great, great-grandchildren love me and I love them and can take care of them when their mother wants a little rest.”

Mothers of men! Mothers of churches! Mothers of human thoughtfulness! Mothers of the spirit of Christ! Why stand we here idle when the world calls? Why fret we with questions of tomorrow's bank account while the hearth-fire gleams and the child prattles, and the tree shines with its candles and the stores are full of wonders and the heart is full of love? Tomorrow the hearth may be cold and nothing be hovering about it but the ghosts of the day when you had the chance to make happiness weigh down the scale of figures in a bank-book. And among those spirits that hover, there will be faces that wear the smiles of the

ones that bore us, glowing with the undying fire of that Love that saves this world; that makes its endless processions of its human-kind and that keeps the sweet, sweet look in the faces of dear old ladies.

ON "OLD-TIME TORCHLIGHT PROCESSIONS"



I STARTED out marching with a tin hat and a torch over my shoulder, when I was about fourteen, all for the glory of Hayes and Wheeler. We used to meet in a sail-loft and drill, and the promise of a torch and a uniform was sufficient to get together about three hundred boys. Some of the older graduated into the "cavalry" (I almost wrote that word "calvary") and rode horses that went sidewise at the blare of the trumpet and the bursting of the bomb. Horses were not so educated in those days.

The glory of a torch-light parade was wholly in its length, which was somewhat dependent on the way it stretched out. Sometimes in our republican town, the democratic parades used to come along in sections, one-half of it tarumping afar while the other was tarumping in the near vicinity. There was always a good deal of friction between the two political parties as to which had the longer procession and which indicated victory in the fall. Boys participated in the debate. It was usually fought out on the back-lots.

The sight of a staid citizen weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds, stealing out of his peaceful home at about 6 P.M. to form in parade in the city

square at 7 P.M. prompt, was a sight to remember. He had a furtive look on his face and a uniform under his arm. Often he was gotten up as a knight with a tin sword and a helmet. His wife giggled at him with reason. Women did not vote in those days. Subsequently we may expect women to ride horses in political parades dressed in Joan of Arc regalia. All we can say is that they would look very attractive; far better than a fat man with a red face on the back of a ramping plug bouncing up and down and threatening to burst.

We used to march miles and miles and cheer until we had no cheerfulness left. Every house with three candles on the window panes was sufficient for a cheer. I was captain of one company of boys and I had to get up in front as the cheer came down the line and yell "Three cheers for our patriotic citizen and true republican, William Scroggins!" We piped our tenor cheer like a flock of seabright hens. We had the right to carry our torches home—or at any rate we took the right—and I have known boys in my company to march in the democratic ranks for the sake of getting a torch. There were all kinds of torches—some that had a hole in the handle up which you could blow and make the flames stream. There was the story of the patriotic son of Ireland in a democratic parade who was found tied up in an agonized knot on the curbing. As they stood over him his friend Casey said: "Poor devil! He sucked his toorch."

All this was supposed to stimulate adherence to the cause and to create the crowd psychology, which is such a fearful thing that even college professors write books about it and offer remedies for it—unaware, poor things, that it is a part of human

nature and can be cured quite as well as we can cure the sun from giving us a coat of tan. We all like to be winners and always will. Public opinion is a sort of concentrated human desire. The crowd spirit is not the crowd gone crazy, whatever the mob-mind may be. We wore white hats for Blaine because we wanted Blaine to win. And some men wanted him to win a whole lot when they put on those fuzzy monstrosities and went abroad in them. I have seen men in Blaine hats who ought to have been in museums. They were museum-pieces all right.

Henry Wood of our town marched in a parade once and his little boy marched with him, holding his hand. The way was long and Henry had enjoyed all of the thrills that he could hold for one night. He was coming around a corner of an old home street, plodding along thinking—for he was a thinker, all right. Suddenly his little boy, weary with the eternal march, said: "Where are we going now, daddy?" Henry looked at his boy tenderly and said: "Damned if I know, darling."

That was it. We didn't know. We just marched. Many of us are doing the same today. We have marched a long way; we have carried the torch; we have even sucked the torch, the wrong way; we have plodded in the dust; we have lost step with the band; we have cheered lights along the way for folks we have never seen before or since; we have rejoiced in victories that were barren for us, but we are still going. And as we hold the hands of children and they ask us, "Where are we going now, daddy?" we say without the expletive, "Umphed if I know, darling."

And that's the fun of it.

ON "MY AUNT'S MILLINERY SHOP"



MY AUNT was a pretty little woman with a certain degree of style for the country. She walked with a little hurried step and when she went to the post-office in the village in the afternoon she looked like a robin running thru the rain after an early worm. She was so neat and trim and sprightly that she was my notion of a pretty woman. And she was as good as she was pretty.

In her early life she went over to Franklin, Mass., into a straw-shop. All of the country girls did that and came home in the summer after earning good wages in the winter making hats. Here she learned her millinery. She had two different shops in the village at different times and as I look back on them, I am confused by the two. Sometimes I see her biting off thread in one window and sometimes in the other, and often I see the screen of cloth in the rear in which the occasional helper worked, away from the gaze of the populace, which sometimes numbered two or three down the drowsy street.

I wonder that I am writing about such personal things. There is no reason except there may be a certain anthology of a country town about it that perhaps is a fading memory and deserves to be preserved as a part of the simple annals that I have been endeavoring to preserve in my own way—let alone what others may do about them. Be that as it may, the thought of that millinery shop stirs memories of singular things.

There is a horse hitched to a post, flicking flies with the swish of his tail. There is the village dignitary, Steve Carr, sitting on the steps of his store, smoking a cigar and not a customer in sight. There is the little river gleaming in the hot sun at the foot of the street. There is the boy coming from the train, with the afternoon mail. There is T. Tyler, tailor, coming out of his shop with his T. D. in his mouth and his hair disheveled. It is so dull that I go into my aunt's millinery shop and watch her work.

I don't believe that more human nature can be found in any place more emphatically suggested in its oddities than in the millinery shop. I have never appreciated the paucity of old-time finery more keenly than in comparing those days with the attitude of a modern girl buying a hat. In those days there were no trimmed hats in glass cases, thousands of them to be tried on and cast disdainfully aside. The old-time girl went in and had a hat or a bonnet built from the foundation up. She looked at a picture of a handsome girl with a becoming hat on her head and for the moment had the notion that she was going to look like that. But often she did not, in the final analysis. Old ladies never had a new hat or bonnet. They came in with the relics of all of the bonnets they had ever had and, by the addition of a new shape and a possible flower, got the ultimate goods.

My aunt was a gay chatterer and she sold the goods to old ladies as well as young. She used to take their old wares and try her best to make them "do." She would turn flowers and twist feathers and save for poor old souls. She built wedding bonnets that were dreams in those days and that never by any stretch of

extravagance cost over four dollars. And that is only one-fifth the price of a "bang hat" nowadays.

I can see her now sitting by the window, pretty thing, making bonnets in a hurry to wear to funerals. Everybody seemed to be in a hurry for bonnets to wear to funerals. I used to come in and ask in my way, "How's funerals?" The corpse was surely honored with furbelows in those days. Aunt snipped and sewed and sang and even went to market once a year and came home all full of the romance and the spice of the great town.

On the opposite side of the shop she sold toys. I used to go over there and look them over. I never knew what she was thinking about, but I have never forgotten one rebuke for a childish subtlety that I indulged in in her shop. I was looking over her toys. If there was anything in the world I wanted, it was a jack-knife. She sold 'em but evidently did not give them away. I was looking over one of them that pleased me, quite unaware that she was watching me out of the corner of her eye. I was aware that it had happened that if you suddenly asked what was in a package and someone said "jack-knife" the next words might be "Don't you want it? You may have it."

I tried it and aunt looked at me and said: "Yes, sonny, that is a jack-knife. Didn't you think it was when you were looking at it?"

The street still drowsily stretches up and down hill in my memory. And all are dust that dwelt therein. And I had no jack-knife when I wanted it and when I can have one I don't want it. Ah me! The funeral "bunnits!" And the silent customers that

are no more! And the jack-knives that we didn't get! And the waters that ran to the sea by the way of the gleaming river. It is all one with Francois Villon—"Where are the snows of yester year!" Where are the "bunnits" of my aunt whom I saw laid away under the roses years ago.

ON "A RIDE TO BATH"



HAVE been to Bath before by electrics and have had rides that were dreams; "all aboard" at Lewiston; a passing glimpse of the Byzantine towers and turrets of Lisbon Falls and then "all out" at Bath—just like that; my nose all of the time in a book. Perfectly lovely, excellent service, up hill, down dale, with the broomstick train.

Hence! And therefore! This account of a recent trip to Bath has no concern with the average trip and is no criticism of the trolley line called L. A. and W., which some foolish people think means Late Always and Wherever. Not so. This trip was Special. It was unique, like Peary's Dash for the North Pole; Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; Eliza's Trip Across the Ice, Pursued by Bloodhounds; The Voyage of the Mayflower; George Washington's Crossing of the Delaware.

We were going to Bath last Saturday and the problem was to get from Lewiston to Bath by noon, twenty-eight miles. We might have done it by ox-team in 1840, or by limousine in 1920. My limousine is laid up with the lumbago and besides, I have no

limousine and never had. No editor should have a limousine. He should be at work. And if I had owned a limousine, I was advised that it would have been too icy on the roads to have driven it.

The Maine Central Railroad once ran between Lewiston and Bath. It "runs" no longer. It simply leaves here and goes off into Alice in Wonderland and remains there and you wake up elsewhere with the Cheshire Cat. There is a train from here to Bath sometime before daybreak but it goes nowhere in particular and waits two hours on the way and comes back to Lewiston in the same fashion. Its schedule rips along at the rate of eight miles an hour. The price is a dollar a minute. Any man who travels between Lewiston and Bath by the Maine Central will age alarmingly. If you started out to visit a young mother with a new-born infant in Bath, the child would meet you at the train with whiskers—if male; and with hair out over its ears, if female. If I want to get to Bath by train for Christmas, I start on the previous Fourth of July. A lady friend of mine started from Bath in the prime of health to visit me in Lewiston and when she reached here she was just barely able to get admission into the Old Ladies' Home.

So we took the electrics at 8.35 and planned to get to Bath at 11 A.M.—not speedy but safe! One hundred and fifty minutes for thirty miles. Twelve miles an hour! Fine! We bowled along at this lightning speed until we reached Topsham. At Lisbon Falls they changed conductors and motormen, and I am not sure that they did not change them at Lisbon, at Pejepscoot and at the Crooked Bridge. I didn't mind.

Nobody seemed to know just when a new conductor and a new motorman might appear out of the woods and ask toll. I have nothing to say about the trip until we reached the middle of the bridge at Topsham, except that we were then twenty-five minutes late and I could hear the wedding march reverberating thru the distances, in fancy. On the bridge we had to get out and change cars. The other car was wrong end to, and we went into it and faced back home. Then we waited. I don't know what we waited for; but it seemed to be a discussion of "Who's Who in Motormen." One motorman came up and looked our car over and backed into the river. Another came over and rapped our controller-handle and ran off with it. Then he went behind a brick building and looked at the river. Then a motorman came in and opened a window and looked dreamily at the landscape and went away. Then a motorman and a conductor came along and talked it over. "Tum-tum-te-tum! Here comes the groom," says I, "stiff as a broom."

By and by the motorman picked out his conductor and languidly the twain shouted "This car for Bath!" and together, began to inch us up the hill back to. Every time the motorman gave her the juice, it snapped my neck back until the joints rattled. The motorman opened the window and let the cold air in on my feet. But I did not mind that. We were moving, at any rate. Thus we backed up hill into Brunswick and the village clock said 45 minutes late. Unusual! Most unusual!

Then we went in on the Freeport track and they changed motormen and conductors again. And the new conductor came briskly in and shouted "This car

for Bath!" And then we waited ten minutes and then ran out on the Bath line and waited while they changed conductors and motormen. Then they ran fifty feet when we saw another car coming from Bath. The two cars ran up closely together and the conductors and motormen discussed which one should retreat and which advance. Then I think they went over to the moving pictures. Finally, we retreated again to the Freeport line. Then the conductor of the Bath car came over into ours and ours went into the Lewiston car and they exchanged overcoats, trolley irons, and controller handles. Then the Lewiston-bound car went bounding past us on its way to Lewiston and we were surprised by the conductor coming in and shouting violently "Brunswick! This car for Bath!"

We went rattling along like a deer over windfalls until we got to the Maine Central. It would be impossible for the Maine Central to get out of the way of anything in Brunswick; so we had to wait for two trains and a shifter and a coal-train and a load of pulp and a snow-plow to pass us while the gates were down.

The conductor again came in—I think he was the same conductor—and said, "This car for Bath." They certainly have fine service. We were just ready to be off and away on our dashing pathway of steel when there was a shout from the Maine Central station. Fifteen or twenty passengers from the train were leaping our way with baggage. We waited five minutes for them and took them on. Now we're off! We changed conductors and motormen at Merrymeeting and again at Cook's. It seems that every conductor and motorman was off his feed time! "Da-da-dee-da! Here comes the bride!" We had taken on ten or

twelve more wedding guests. The Ancient Mariner (that's I) regaled them with hopes. And finally we rounded the corner of the street where the church stands. And lo! We were in plenty of time. We would not have been there a moment earlier.

And that's the beauty of the travel from Lewiston to Bath—you always get there in plenty of season for what you want to do in Bath! Wonderful, I say. The Electrics know their business. I just love their variety and their certainty!

ON "THE QUALMS OF GOLF"



OMEHOW I dread the return of golf to these cities, for it means a revival of conversation that is as catching as the seven-years itch. When I used to play golf, and others played golf, the means of escape from golf-talk were as good as the means of escape from the lower dungeon of a modern penal institution. If I went into the reading room of a club someone was telling how he made the third hole in three, and if I went over into the smoking room of the club someone was telling how he made the fourth hole in four. And if I went into the billiard room someone was telling how he made the fifth hole in five. One drove into a bunker; another drove into the rough; another drove into a pigsty and another drove into a baby-carriage. One halved a hole with the brassies and another won a hole with a niblick and another lost a hole with a putter and another won a match with a chew of tobacco. I could not escape it; I had to take up the game.

We had a country club that was positively lovely in view; but weak on greens. They said we needed sheep for it; but about all we had was sheep or we never would have lost the club and its property. I suppose we lost our interest in golf because it was not golf. As far as I was concerned, I had as soon take a violent run over a sheep-pasture as to play a game on this land. But the wind was soothing and it was good for my indigestion and I could talk golf just as well over that nine-holes as anywhere else.

I believe that the most wonderful game of golf ever played was on these links. You see it was this way. I was playing—

I notice that you are moving away, so I will defer the story to some other time, and that is why I have qualms about the revival of golf in these cities. We shall have golf talk right along all of the time everywhere; but I don't know but what it will be a relief from motor talk. Anything makes me sick—never having had a motor car—is to hear men sit down and talk about the internal parts of an automobile.

Well, sir, I was playing a foursome, a mixed foursome for the championship of the second division of the handicap element of the club, and as I was driving off the third hole and—

Pardon me, but if you are not interested, I will desist. You see there is so much that one might say about golf that is really valuable that I am willing to break the silence of years to dilate on the topic, and that is why I have additional qualms.

Golf is a game of parts. You part from temper, golf balls, money, time, opportunity. You belong to a club and every moment you don't play you are losing

money, and every moment you do play you are losing money, and there you are.

It was like this. After I drove off in that foursome and landed behind a tree as usual, I took my niblick which was named Sir Thomas, because it was very short in the handle and had a peculiar head on it—why it was called by such a name I never knew, but so it was, and when I whacked the ball it struck against the tree and went into my pocket. That was not so peculiar as was the fact that nobody saw where it went and we all thought that it was buried in the tree. We called it two and I threw out and drove again and struck a fat man in the stomach, and he was so mad that he threw the ball into the woods and we could not find it. We called it three and I was playing four and on my next stroke—

If this wearies you, I just as soon talk about something else. I can see that you would prefer that I discuss some other topic and I will do so, limiting my reservations to the League of Nations. I will not discuss that or the size of Harding's plurality or the reasons why the majority was so enormous, with anyone. I feel that we are approaching a revival of the pre-Raphaelite art and that the general scale of living is to come down and that we are likely to have hard times this winter, and that if a person owes you anything, you better collect it speedily, but I will not talk about the League of Nations.

It might interest you to know, however, that on my next stroke in that hole in that mixed foursome, I did an amazing thing. I drove into a limousine and woke up the chauffeur and when he revived we found the ball between his teeth.

It is, therefore, not without reason that one has qualms about the coming of golf into the social life of a town.

ON "STILTS"



LONG about this time, old-fashioned boys used to take to stilts. I say along about this time, but as a matter of fact there was no special time. When a boy got restless and out-of-sorts and was compelled to divert himself, he must take either to piracy, barn-burning, tight-rope walking, running away to sea or walking on stilts. And I say stilts because it is my subject. A boy might start to make a box-trap, or to raise rabbits or to hunt skunks or any one of a thousand things.

In this season between hay and snow; between taws and bob-sleds, when out of doors do not attract and when life is almighty tough for a boy, there is not much for him to live for. He is not appreciated. He is not understood. Nobody seems to sympathize with him. He gets moody very rapidly. There is something that boils up in him like the water in a pan recently set upon the fire. It steams and makes a noise and disturbs the other functions. You should then see to it immediately that the safety-valve is not tied down. Stilts are as good as anything, as I have said before; a box-trap will do for certain boys. But for boys who want something dangerous, exciting, blood-stirring and semi-boastful, the stilts are alone adequate for a brief experience.

Any boy can make stilts—with a good deal of fuss. He has to find two pieces of straight board about four

inches wide and two inches thick and he has to have two clumps of wood to nail on them at the requisite height from the ground where he can put his feet, and he has to have nails and a hammer and some room. And he has to have a jack-knife for the purpose of rounding off the handles. And then he has to have a door-yard and an audience. Stilts are no good without an audience, and herein lies my application of the boy-on-stilts to the scheme of life in general, as you may discover later on if this talk comes out anywhere near what I have in mind.

It is no great trick to learn to walk on stilts; indeed, it comes rather too easily. A few varied contortions, a few wild leaps into space, a couple of falls wherein one can easily drop his stilts and get to the ground safely, are all of the usual experiences. And once setting forth, on stilts, a boy may walk amid an admiring group of girls, nonchalantly as possible, wobbly in reality, but conceivably with the grace of a courtier as he eyes the landscape and studies the clouds or leans gracefully against a fence or wall.

In reality I never saw a boy who had any grace whatever on stilts. I never saw a boy who really persevered in learning to walk on stilts. I have never seen a boy who enjoyed walking on stilts; but I never knew a boy who at some time or other did not try it. And the reason is instinctive and intuitional. There is an egotism in stilts that is natural to man. It lifts him above his fellow-boys. It indulges his notion of looking over the heads of other persons. It makes his stride magnificent and regal. It pleases his desire for prominence. It attracts the notice of the men beneath, dogs, cats and insects also included.

There are a great many persons who are walking most of the time on stilts. Lofty in conversation, stilted in expression, wobbly in logic, looking over the heads of the every-day folk, trying to see what is beyond, when in reality the things over there are just the same as the common things here underfoot. I have known men who never talked the common verbiage of the every-day person, conversational stilt-walking. I have known people who never admire anything unless it comes from afar and never wish to be anywhere except in some strangely distant land. They are on mental stilts. I have seen people who never esteem the home folks but take in the stranger and are taken in by the stranger, and who walk thus on stilts of the professional lion-hunter and are often gobbled up by the lion. Many people used to walk on theological stilts. The Puritans who, almost three hundred years ago, drove Anne Hutchinson to her death and hung Mary Dyer in the morning for their declaration of "Covenant by Grace" as opposed to "Covenant by Works," walked on theological stilts and strutted about, thus ludicrous, severe and wicked in their devotion, not to the ideas of God, but to the stilts on which they walked.

Let the children have stilts. Let them blow off steam with them. Get up on them yourself if the earth seems dull and the height seems low to your weary vision. I have no criticism of your desire for a change; but for heaven's sake and the sake of us who live on earth, do not stay up there. Come down often and stay long with us common folk; enjoy us if you can; bear with our shortcomings and our short stature and quit your strolling and your wobbling. For the feet of

man must be on earth with the common things of life even tho his head is in the air; yea! even tho his imagination hath wings like the bird!

ON "MY BEST UMBRELLA"



BOUGHT it thirty-four years ago and it is still my best umbrella—my only, own umbrella, the relic of my youth, the shelter of my years, and when I carry it (as I occasionally do) and show it to my friends as an umberell of age and distinction, they look at me doubtfully and curiously.

The other day I left it on the window of the room of the Governor's Executive Council at Augusta, and invading an executive session of the Council to rescue it, I told that august body that, had the Governor misappropriated it, I would hardly have held him guilty—it is such a temptation to own such an umberell. It would confer distinction on even a Governor of Maine, with large responsibilities and a corresponding contingent account. For it is a large, noble, obese umberell; and it has all the appurtenances of its years—angina pectoris, arterio sleroris and ankylosis of the ribs. And yet, withal, it is wonderful. They don't make such umbrellas nowadays. It has an ivory head, which is considered appropriate to me. On it is carved a monkey holding a nut. Still appropriate. The monkey roosts on a stick. There the appropriateness ceases. Its stock is stout; its size is ample, its beauty is chaste and sufficient.

You ask what is there of public interest in my thirty-four-year-old umbrella and I say this—it is significant of a certain social attitude of the community and a certain regard for the umbrella. I ask you, where can you find another umbrella that is thirty-four years old and still a man's "best umbrella," fit to take to church—if he dared take it there, lest some deacon might mistake it for his own! A community that has respected my property right to an umbrella for two generations, merits mention, and such a community is this. A person who has never forgotten or lost or mislaid his umbrella for thirty-four years is worthy of appreciation, even if I have to call it to your attention as I am now doing.

Thirty-four years under one umbrella! The days of my youth! Alas, the fleeting years! The girls that have been sheltered beneath it; the storms that have beaten upon it; the thoughts I have had beneath it! Do you have no fondness for umbrellas in general? Is there nothing sweet in the antiquity of two beneath the same shelter of night when the rains beat upon the silken house and the near-by river sobs; and the waters roar against the bridge piers, and the lamps of the streets are dim, and the pavements glisten like polished sheet steel in the slanting rains. This is the very umbrella that took us home, when we stood by the door and I saw reflected in her eyes, something that every rainstorm, since then, has brought back to mind—and then I heard the bull-dog and the old man both coming, at the same time.

I hardly appreciated my best umbrella until the other day, when I again took it from its home security and wore it to Augusta. People noticed it. It had a

colonial atmosphere. It had a look like the fan-shaped windows over the doorways of the houses in Wiscasset. It looked like the portraits of old governors, like John Fairfield and William King. It conferred on one a suggestion of a past, mysterious and traditional. No wonder I felt free to tell the Governor's Executive Council about the angel (I should say umberell) they had been entertaining unawares. There is something in years even of umbrellas to respect. There is a dignity in the age of personal belongings that we do not appreciate. One of the richest men in Maine drives his first automobile (one-cylinder) coughing along and, my word for it, he has my respect for his attachment. Old houses, old friends, old furniture, old books, old wine, old tapestries, old songs, old truths, old faces, old memories, old—yet ever new if only there entered into them the thoroughness of the craftsman, the undying fire of the Word, the fadeless element of beauty, the never-ending continuity of human or divine worth of the thing itself. I would not care for my umberell if it had not been ivory and silk, fit to endure as properly made and bespeaking original family connections. You will not love your old books unless they are worthy. And old faces! They sweeten as the days come and go; enduring not by any other reason than because the thorough work of the soul shines out of them, the beauty that is brother and sister of the Truth that is eternal! So much for the umberell which now I fold and lay away for my posterity.

ON "A SERMON ON THE SEED"



THE other day, Dr. Twitchell of Auburn, who conducts a nine-acre farm at Monmouth, Me., summers, and does well with it, showed me a simple thing that has kept me thinking at odd moments.

It was a picture of a great number of Hubbard squash raised from a single seed. I think that they weighed 146 pounds, lovely to the frugal eye of the mind, a part of the greatest thing in all the world—the crops of earth.

This great assemblage of Hubbard squash in the photograph came from a single seed weighing but a trifling part of a single ounce. What an alchemy! What a more wonderful thing than the transmutation of a base metal into gold! What mystic power is it that takes this seed, as it is placed in the ground, and from out the seemingly insoluble earth and some undying fire of Life makes it into vine and gourd. Think of what it constructs! The vine, the leaf, the flower and the colors of gold, of emerald, and the salmon hues of the firm flesh of the food. It paints the outside of the squash with a waterproof material impervious to moisture of the earth and of the rains. It increases its food power six thousand times. It creates within itself its own powers of reproduction thousands of times. It feeds the bees and the birds. It holds within the cups of its flowers the dews and the rains for its own pollenization. It lays all this before mankind and will go on and on with care until the end of the sunshine and the dews.

These things make us wonder. And wonder is an element of culture and of intelligence that lies at the root of both science and philosophy. Wonder is the light of life and when it dies life dies. And the greatest source and provocative of wonder is this application of power behind the universe—the power that we call God. We are prone, in this day, to look at symbols of power as power itself. We look on money that can purchase work of other hands and purchase the work of other brains, as power; but the power is in the hand and brain and in the seed in the ground and in the illimitable forces of the universe. We do not think much about it, but the abundance of power about us is amazing and a source of wonder, even to the scientist. Recently a popular magazine has had an article on the wonder of the human heart and the human arteries and the human intestines, if you please. He compares the heart to the highest-duty dynamo ever devised by man, and by the comparison, man's efforts, even with electricity, are puerile. You could not make a piece of hose or other conduit that would by any possible means do the marvelous work that the human arteries perform, resilient, carrying circulation to remotest portions of the body by tubes, infinitely smaller than any that we can conceive; and yet capable of such extension by elasticity in periods of stress and excitement as to make them wonderful, beyond words. Do you know any person who can make an object like the certain class of microbes, that can pass through the most carefully constructed filter, and that within a short time can yet create millions of their kind with enough virulent power to kill an ox. Aristotle thought that there were

about 500 kinds of life. Yet today we know that there are more forms of one family of insects than there are stars, visible to the naked eye.

The immensity of things! We may be seeing to-night the twinkling of a star that went out ages ago, and yet light travels 186,000 miles a second. When we see the light of a star such as Alpha Centauri, which lies nearer us by ten billion miles than any other fixed star, we see light that started from that star four years ago. If the telescope reveals the hundreds of millions of heavenly bodies, of which we see but a corner, the microscope reveals the millions of the lesser world. What is this universe in which we are placed? It is a matter for us children to ponder over as our own children ponder over this world, cupped in blue over us and peopled infinitely, from Dr. Twitchell's squash to the wonders of the cold depths of the sea. If we pass into cell-action we are lost! If we pick up the leaf of grass we have a cosmos fit to inspire another Walt Whitman to sing the songs of a cosmos of undying life! Interrelations! Universal flux and reflux! Progress and evolution of forms! Seed and squash. Cat's fur and human hair from the same bread and milk! And we so idle, so vain, so mistaken in our estimates of values, so eager for the dollar that counts for nothing unless that squash grows, those insects thrive, those stars shine, those arteries work, and that heart beats; and unless the Undying Fire lives in the roots of the grasses.

Agriculture is our handmaiden. It is the noblest of our professions. Life is the divine gift to man and the seed in the ground is the symbol of the mightiest transmutation; as is the seed that of life in all living

organisms. Unless we till we perish! Unless we seek the soil we die. If we forget the fields the cities shall starve. By the sweat of our faces shall we earn our daily bread. Yet in the midst of marvels we cease to wonder and to worship. But—unless we do, we shall perish!

ON "THE FIRST FROSTS"



MIND me these November mornings of many memories of early frosty mornings in the country, when as a boy, the world turned white in a night—not with snow, but with that mysterious coating of rare white crystals, that stood up separate and distinct, along the fence rails and on the grasses.

There would be sun over the intervalles and streaming down the road to the village, where the wheel-ruts would be dark and warm looking with a mark of an early passing wheel. We knew that the frost would soon go, but on the door-steps a boy could slide and an anxious sled-runner could be hauled over the frosts of the door-yard.

It was as tho the hand of some painter had come in the night and had coated the world with hexagons of diamonds and aquamarine. They caught the light of the sun and flashed all over a commonplace homeside in the country and beat anything that Aladdin ever did in a single night. All of the dew of the world had been transformed in a twinkling into gems. A boy would stand in the midst of it and look over the familiar fields and shout with delight at the promise of variety in a dull life that was in reality a succession of marvels.

He saw before him rude buffetings of winter-storm, roads covered hip-deep in snows, ponds ringing to the twang of the skater's heel, deep fires in the fire-place, long evenings and all of the other promise of snug winter in which a boy turns to school with a sense of relief from haying and harvesting.

I have a vivid picture of the frost on the nails on the barn-door—a peculiar effect to linger in one's memory—but so it happens to be. Nails that protruded from the door that were built up into little fluffy mounds like the pussy-willow. And I know how clear and still were these frosty mornings. The air transmits sounds better when it is chill. All sounds are clearer and sharper. Summer sounds are still. The birds have gone. There are a few belated crows cawing over in a near-by field and worrying over the remnants of the harvest where the furrows are streaked with the first frost. But the old hum of summer has passed away. Here is still suggestion of the death and burial of the nascent. It is a world coming back to bread and water after a banquet. Here is the promise of the first snows that will cover all ugliness of withered cornstalk and dead stubble and that will soon be ruffling and fluting the fence-rails and the tilled land in the most fantastic of fashions.

My! But a boy's toes tingle on this first frost and the barn seems warm and cosy and the cattle steam with their breaths in the tie-up and the tomato plants in the old garden lie over, done for at last. The little pond in the meadow shows gleaming and tinkly around the edges with a thin ice. And as the sun advances, everything herbaceous falls over and wilts and the day comes to find it growing black and dead. The ferns

give up the ghost; the long grasses are dead and black; the beechnuts rattle down; the squirrels come out and get busy; the fields are slippery as grease to the foot where the frost lies under the sod; the earth rings like a drum as your heel impinges on it. And by and by all is as before except the look of discouragement that comes with the returning sun and warmth of noon-day.

But—there is in the back of the mind of every observant person some keen memory of some frosty morning—the first white frost of some year. It signifies exhilaration and hope. The prospect of change enters into it. Nature itself wakes up, too. The deer come out of the swamps and begin to look for their mates. The bear crawls into his den and goes to sleep. The ponds get ready to transform themselves into wagon-roads. And vegetation begins to return to the earth what it has taken from it, the slow transmutation of substance back to the storehouse in the form of the plant-sheaf and root, the vegetation not of use for food returning to the soil.

First frosts kill a great deal that is of little value. It is so in life. We have a great many first frosts in our experiences, disappointments of life that come along and come along with periodical disturbance, killing ambitions and plans and futile purposes. Job had a tremendous experience with a white frost on all of his earthly plans. But it was only a cleaning up of the things that should return to God. The undying life principle remains. Even after long winters, out comes the spring. The stars ever shine after the twilight! The dawn comes after the dark.

ON "AN OLD BASEBALL STORY"



HERE is a baseball story that is worth while. It touches on the forbidden ground of gambling and shows that twenty-five years ago, the bad man was just as bad and the good man was just as good as he is now.

It happened in the year when Mike Garrity of Portland was manager for the Lewiston team and when our dearest hope was to beat Portland.

There came a time when the Lewiston team with Willie Maines on its pitching staff was making good headway against the Portland team. Maines was a big, lank, raw-boned man from Windham, Maine. He was a powerful hitter and a good pitcher and had every requisite for the big league except perhaps the courage. He did try out in the major league and came back home because he was happier here.

Portland sent up to Boston in the middle of the season, one day in August, for a pitcher named Big Mike Sullivan, who had been pitching on the Boston National League team and who had been most successful in college baseball. He was a really wonderful pitcher and a great ball player.

Garrity had just sent for a new pitcher named Daniels. He was expected on the day of the game and it was Garrity's intention to pitch Daniels.

Just before the game a well-known Portland sporting man, who, of course, knew Garrity well, for Garrity had managed baseball thru several pennant races and had always been successful there, came to Garrity and said to him that much money had been bet on

the game and that it would be worth a large sum to Garrity if he would not pitch Maines for that game.

Garrity had never intended to pitch Maines, but the suggestion touched him deeply. He could see nothing for him but to pitch Maines. He said nothing to anyone. Indeed he never told this story in his life to anyone until he told it to I. B. Isaacson of Lewiston in connection with the recent baseball scandals in the Chicago White Sox. He went to Maines and told him that he expected him to pitch. Maines demurred. It was not his turn to pitch. Garrity told Maines that if he refused to pitch and made any more trouble about it, he would send him home and that he never should pitch another game of professional baseball as long as he lived.

This frightened Willie and of course Garrity had no means of making good on the threat; but it went with Maines and he finally said that he would pitch and Garrity told him additionally that if he didn't win, it could make no difference; but that if he didn't pitch as he never pitched before, woe be unto him and he would make his life miserable.

I recall the game somewhat indistinctly as to the features; but with vivid distinctness as to Sullivan and Maines. I scored it; but as was my custom, I put these things out of mind when completed and one game forced the memories of others away. But I do recall Sullivan and I do recall Maines as they met that afternoon. We had a strong team with Paddy Shea on third. I do not know but what there were better hitters than Shea but there were few who could hit harder or run slower than he.

The game went to a tie all along. It was won by Lewiston on a terrific hit by Shea who went to third and came home on a short hit into the infield that won the game by some such score as 1 to 0 or 2 to 1.

The point of the tale is the integrity of the manager, Mr. Garrity, his matter-of-fact silence about the affair, his commonplace regard for his duty and his eagerness to balk the purposes of the sporting fraternity. After that game, Shea and Maines were showered with money by the Lewiston fans. The game attracted wide attention. Maines pitched as never before. And the Portland sporting men who came up here fully expecting to lug away about all of the betting-money in Lewiston, left most of it here.

Betting on sports kills the sport. It has its tentacles on football. It has about killed baseball. It ruined horse-racing. It broke up the single-scul rowing features of the United States. It has made the prize-ring notorious. It will kill football and even tennis if it is permitted to operate. Manager Garrity—one of the squarest baseball men that ever lived and one of the shrewdest managers that ever assembled a team—knows all about it and fought it all of his days and will fight it again, if need be.

ON "YOUR FIRST TROUSERS"



YOU recall maybe when you wore dresses—I am now talking exclusively to men—for old-fashioned boys began life in dresses just as they do now, only they retained them to later periods in adolescence. There were old-fashioned mothers who kept boys in gingham dresses and long curls until some of the boys were strong enough to saw wood and chase girls.

Remember those boys kept over long in dresses? Tough, was it not? They had hard times in school and especially after school. They went around flirting their skirts when they ought to have been in overalls. I never remember to have pitied any boy as I did one of these over-ripe chaps who had long red curls falling over his shoulders. He chewed tobacco, too. It was a sight to see this freckle-faced kid in his long, shiny red curls with a mug on him that looked like a rogue's gallery. He just hated his curls but his mother loved them. We had a legend that his mother was disappointed that he did not prove to be a girl and that she delayed the self-deception as long as possible. One day this boy came to school with his hair shingled. Say! If he wasn't a tough-looking youngster!

If you ever wore skirts after you wore cowhide boots with copper toes, as many boys did in the region where I was brought up, you will remember perhaps the day, the hour when you donned the habiliments of man and discarded those of Eve. I have a positive memory of the picture that those old-fashioned gingham-skirted boys made clomping down the aisles at

school in their skirts. And I remember the occurrences that befel the lad who came to the early school in his first trousers.

Our trousers in the early days were not tailor made. It is my memory that mother made 'em. Usually a pair of dad's or elder brother's was razed to make the holiday. A boy stole into them as into the fond embrace of a couple of elbows of stove-pipe. They lined pants with silesia, in those days. Know what silesia is—or was? Fancy making underclothes out of the stuff they now make holland curtains of and you have some idea. They didn't wear underclothes—boys didn't in those days. Nay! Nay! They lined our little panties with whatever came handy. It was supposed to be unsanitary to wear underclothes all winter. So they lined the pants and you went to bed while they were laundered. I never could look on a pair of boy's pants hung on a clothes-line, turned wrong side out for proper airing and drying, without thinking of the cool bed and the hot brick.

Once you had a pair of pants I will say one thing for them, they were yours. Nobody else wanted them. Unlike the calf that father gave you for your own, you retained them until they became antiques. And then if they had withstood the wear and tear as did many of those old fabrics, they went down the line or were passed on into some other family. I remember to have seen early pants of mine stalking around for years after I had outgrown them; and I didn't grow very fast, either. I think I have mentioned a pair of early-rose pants that mother made me out of one of her old beaver coats. They were about half an inch thick and they stood alone. Laid on the floor at night

they looked just like two woodchuck holes. If you got up in the night and stubbed your toe over them, you had to have your toe done up in a rag. I used to try to file a hole thru those pants with a rat-tail file, but it couldn't be done. They slid with me seat-wise over more than a thousand miles of Maine granite and never broke a stitch. A bad boy could have shot me in the seat with a 30-30 rifle and I would never have known it. The teacher could larrup me on the seat of my breeches with a trunk strap by the hour and all she could do was to raise a dust—never a howl.

When I waded to school in those pants and walked up the aisle I looked just like a section of a double-barreled canon. The boys envied me and I envied them. But I was proud of the pants because they were mine and because they were not gingham skirts. With a pair of red-topped copper-toed kip boots flapping about my shanks and these pants avoiding my shins equally well, the winds that blew up my little legs were fierce. We strutted around a good deal in our first pants and stood around where we could be seen, and it was a good deal of satisfaction when some elderly person suggested that some one was "considerably grown up."

Strange how we children loved to be getting older. Now we would stay the swift hurrying years if we might. I do not know if the angels wear skirts or pants. I hope they wear both or either as they please.

ON "THE SPECTRES IN OUR PATH"



THESE talks are intended to have a certain general application as well as a specific value.

We waste much of our time worrying about things that never happen—spectres in our path, that turn out to be nothing but vague forms, mists, odd arrangement of branches, stumps and other material that resolve into nothing harmful when we come nearer.

The most ghostly of all spectres in the way of a young man starting out in life is "poverty." It is only a ghost. The easiest thing in the world for an able-bodied young man to overcome is poverty.

The biographies of great men in history are all full of proof that poverty is a help. Lack of the easy way to an education returns such interest on the investment of hard work, sacrifices, appreciation of values, diligence, toil, frugality that prove there is nothing in the ghost. Rather is it a beckoning hand along the way. Low birth and grinding poverty have really created most of the truly great in history.

You can't possibly be poorer than Pope Gregory the Seventh, the mightiest of the pontiffs; or than Martin Luther, the obscure monk who split in twain the Church; or Gutenberg, who discovered printing; or Lord Kenyon, the bootblack who became chief justice of England; or John Leyden, the great scientist, who walked six miles back and forth daily across the Scottish moors to learn to read; or Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, who had not even clothes for his back when on the eve of his triumphs; or than Vice-President Henry Wilson of Massachusetts; or

than Abe Lincoln, or than Daniel Webster, or than President Garfield, or than ten thousand more whom I might name.

Balzac, the famous novelist, said in his garret, in the chill of cold and hunger, "A man may be either king or hodman; very well! I will be king." There were no ghosts in his way.

Another ghost is the feeling that one has no special talent. This will frighten no able-bodied man or woman. We hear persons saying, "If I only had the brilliancy of so-and-so." There is nothing in it. We have a few geniuses; but most genius is a capacity for hard work. I can find for you in biography, examples of scores and scores of famous men, who were intolerably dull as boys. Stupid urchins in school have made the most illustrious of men. Dull scholars! Bobby Burns, Justus von Liebeg, called "Booby Liebeg," Dean Swift, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Napoleon, Wellington, Grant, Robert Clive, Walter Scott, Oliver Goldsmith; Professor Dalzell said of the young Sir Walter Scott, "Dunce he is and dunce he will remain." Years later, when Scott was at the height of his fame, he visited the same school and asked to see the "dunce." Shown him, the great man passed the lad a sovereign, saying, "There, take that for keeping my seat warm."

The spectres in the path, the lions in the way, are all nothing to the able-bodied man. And even invalids have fought their way to fame. The greatest trouble of all comes to those who give up at the first mishap. I know a student who will not compete in the classes of college because he hears, forsooth, in literary work, essays which he esteems more brilliant than anything

he can ever hope to write. He competes and fails and gives it up. He does not know that it is by constantly going on the route that the spectres disappear. Ask any writer of today how many declinations he has had. There is a young writer who has just been coming into the leading magazines and who is esteemed to be a coming man. He has papered his room with over three hundred polite letters of MSS. declined, all coming before he got an acceptance.

And yet I can hear a certain young lady who is trying to write bemoaning her first manuscript which has been returned as not available and feeling the disgrace so keenly that perhaps she will never try again. Ask Hugh Pendexter up at Norway, Maine, how many of his early stories he had sent back. Ask him how many published stories he peddled until he found the buyer.

So many a young man quits on the first mishap. The time to quit is never. There is some place for energy and some place for reliability and common-sense. There is hardly a great orator who did not fail on his first attempt. Those who succeed from the start usually have no emotions toward oratory or no power to become greater than the average. There are cases of the bankrupt coming back time after time.

Don't quit, then, until you are down and out. And then turn over on your back, and you will see the stars that bid you rise again and go to your work.

ON "CO-OPERATION AFTER A FASHION"



TWO men in a Maine town decided to run a garden together and to raise four pigs on shares, and they professed to be actuated by that honest communistic feeling that makes the Bolsheviks proclaim with such fervor the brotherhood of men.

These men are very near us in location so that I will not indicate the fair hillside that they chose nor the breed of pigs that they selected; I will only sketch broadly the impulses and the results of their altruistic emotions as they set forth in the spring to demonstrate the values of co-operative industry.

One man happened to have more cash than the other; so he bought the seed, and as they planted it to potatoes, it cost a pretty penny to lay the ground in all its promise. One of the men is a big, blue-eyed, natural born gardener; the other is a slender scholastic person who has a tendency to books and who has no heritage of blood of them that till the soil. It takes something of that sort to make things grow. And this the blue-eyed chap happened to have—the natural intuitions for the soil, a knowledge of when to plant and when to hoe and when to dig. The other man had nothing but a desire to share.

So they went into partnership and the blue-eyed man saw to it that the seed was paid for; the land was prepared; the potatoes were planted and that the ground was tilled. He did most of the hoeing and the cultivating as the summer progressed and the other man worked in a desultory and nervous way—

now doing something and now doing nothing and all of the time anticipating.

Then they bought the pigs. Each went forth to buy his own and the blue-eyed chap selected big, strong pigs with crooked tails and the other man selected smaller pigs with straight tails and they put the four pigs into the pen and waited for them to grow. Pigs is pigs—with certain differences by way of peculiarity. The blue-eyed man knew more about pigs than did the other chap. This was strictly co-operative and so he used his knowledge wisely. But it did not prevent him, just the same, from maintaining a certain proprietary interest in the two pigs that he happened to have selected. It was with no mean spirit that he watched his two pigs shoulder the other two pigs away from the co-operative and communistic trough, at feeding-time. A stronger pig is apt to do this in the commune of the pig, where there are no class-distinctions except ability to get the grub, and willingness to work for it. The blue-eyed man was always there when the pigs were fed and he saw that the pigs got an equal chance to get the results of their honest effort. The other chap was rarely there and he trusted to the Marxian doctrine that capital is the surplusage of the labor of all, for whatever comfort the pigs might get out of the feed.

The seasons grew and the blue-eyed man's hoeing bore fruit and the blue-eyed man's pigs grew very much faster than the clerkly man's pigs, and the potatoes blossomed and the pigs' tails straightened or crooked as the heritage of the pig indicated in the scheme of the Lord God Almighty, that makes somehow one pig to differ from another in size and fatness,

instead of making them all on the basis of a minimum wage and efficiency. And when the season was over and the co-operative association of the blue-eyed man and the clerkly man, and the crooked-tailed pigs and the straight-tailed pigs, and the well-hoed and the scantily-hoed potatoes came to a day of reckoning, there was a question over whose pigs were these and whose were those, and where the co-operation began and where it ended.

The blue-eyed man confessed to a certain subtlety in selection of the pig that could get the most out of the trough and saw indistinctly the analogy between the pigs and his own attitude in selecting them. He considered it good business, however, and perfectly legitimate, and hardly could see where the value of his own brain-effort should be set at naught in the matter. Indeed he reckoned that it had a property value in the unearned increment of the pig by reason of selection. But this was co-operation. Did the blue-eyed man hoe for the other man; did he select pigs for the other man; did he contribute his intuitional knowledge of seed-time and harvest to the other man; did he feed the pigs for the other man?

All these issues are abeyance. The wives of the men have entered into the discussion and one of them favors dividing the pigs on the basis of a crooked-tailer and a straight-tailer to each; but the proposal has not yet been accepted. Co-operation goes well when brains and toil are on a dead level. Brains somehow seem to disturb it fearfully. I wonder why?

ON "HAVING NOTHING TO DO"



HAVE been in the woods for two weeks, in a log-house on a bluff fronting a rippling stream. From its door we look upon a pond, and beyond the pond, we see a mountain whose feet seem to stand in the pond, and whose sides are covered with golden-leaved aspens, crimson maples and deep garnet oak. And all of this 3,000-foot bouquet swims in the placid mirror of that pond and leads the eye down to caverns of lush color, below the waters.

Up here in this camp in the woods are no telephones, no trolleys, no newspapers, no callers, no stock markets, no bank-accounts, no bills, no daily grist of business-letters. The silent forests stand about. The moose-birds flit silently about the camp. The wild duck swims in the pool. The stars rise in the twilight and complete their torch-like processional thru the long, still night and the dawn breaks not like thunder "out of China cross the bay," but comes like a debutante into the quiet room or else standing tip-toe on the mountain tops flings its streaming banners thru the trees and across the misty ponds.

I often reproach myself, when I go into this camp in October, at the selfishness that fills my heart with its drug-like appeal. I go after wasting my effort in getting ready for the absence: the doing of a month's work in two weeks; in the preparation of "copy" in advance; and when I really lay down this work and look out of the rear door of the car of the train that speeds away to woodland, I wonder if it is right to be so eager for something that I so often preach

against—the almost lost art of doing nothing whatsoever.

Let me picture to you the long room in the cabin filled with men of the first morning in camp, most of them up and about, getting ready for breakfast, and I lying there, suddenly aroused from an unaccustomed deep sleep, wondering just where I am. One shakes himself into semi-consciousness and as the full truth of the situation breaks upon him he snuggles into his bed and says to himself, "I have not even a single, tiny, infinitesimal, microscopical, darned thing to do."

Did you ever feel that way? And if so, how many times in your life have you felt that way? At home even on a Sunday morning, you don't get that feeling. You have to get up. Here you don't have to get up—someone will bring you your coffee in bed. At home you have to eat. Here, you don't have to eat! At home you have to shave. Here you don't have to shave. At home you have to dress. Here you don't have to dress. You can't think of a single duty running counter to your wishes. You don't have to wash your face or brush your teeth. You don't have to think, even. Not one of the customary cares of home encroaches upon your time. You don't have to speak. You don't have to meditate, even. All you have to do is lie there, and swim in the luxury of doing exactly as you please.

It occurs to me that we get very little of that in this world even in our vacationing and that is why I advocate this sort of a vacation rather than one that sends people skurrying by railroad trains with fixed schedules over long-drawn tours, housed often in hotels with strict social customs that must be observed.

I would say that we are torn and frazzled by our daily round of duties and by the ceaseless beating upon our nerves of the ten million tiny impacts of the noises of civilization, the telephone bells, the slamming of doors, the interruption of visitors, the demands of business upon our judgment, and the never-ending feeling of unaccomplished work. Under this, men and women suddenly find themselves unbalanced, the physical subordinate at last to the tense strumming of the nerves vibrated until they refuse to cease vibrations.

The remedy lies in "nothing to do," selfish as it may seem. Absolutely nothing imperative! Away from the town, in the deep hospital of the healing woods of Maine; away from telephone and telegraph, when big things stand about soothingly and steadfast, like big trees, big mountains, big, silent ponds, big game stalking thru the forest aisles, big silences. This joyous morning rest that I have indicated; this snuggling into a bed with a feeling that you are no truant from business but that this IS your business, makes you into a child-like person. You feel like the small boy who stays in bed with a painless illness, that is ever afterward remembered as so delicious an experience—perhaps the happiest event of your childhood because you then had "nothing to do"; no school; no chores; nothing but just to turn over and sleep again.

Thus have I spent two weeks and found it philosophically perfect; rich in renewal of boyhood memories; drowsy in comfort; happy in its freedom; and ending only when, at last, the mood passed and the tug of the town again overcame the tendency to rest. Other vacations have I had—seashore, with its fitful

activities, travel, city life, automobiling, but none like that of the deep woods that ever call to me like the memories of the arms of a mother lulling her child upon her bosom.

ON "SOME OLD NEWSPAPERS"



VERY now and then some excited person comes into this office with a copy of "*The Ulster County Gazette*," printed with turned rules, in mourning for George Washington. The other day, a Maine newspaper "fell for it," giving a description of this "rare copy."

I suppose I have at least six copies of it somewhere about the premises. It is merely a reproduction, issued about fifty years ago and sold by thousands.

But, I WOULD like a copy of the *Falmouth Gazette* if anyone has one, or a copy of John Neal's *Yankee*; for I have no doubt that if one were interested in reading newspaper accounts of the burial of George Washington (which I am not) these newspapers carried mention of the same. The *Falmouth Gazette* dated back to January, 1785, at Portland, first newspaper ever issued in the District of Maine. Benjamin Titcomb founded it and he was more of a preacher than editor and more of a printer than either. Thomas B. Wait had more to do with starting the paper than did Titcomb, for he was a stationer and had an interest in news. The *Falmouth Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* which Titcomb "pulled off" from the old hand press Jan. 1st, 1785, has endured in a certain way up to now, through various names. Wait was really an editor and

a writer and a man of great courage and constancy. In the election of 1792 when Maine was a single Congressional district, Wait stood for Judge Thatcher who had become very unpopular. Wait took a licking or two but re-elected Judge Thatcher. Nathaniel Willis, father of N. P. Willis, the poet, and Fanny Fern (Mrs. Parton) the author, worked on this paper as a writer and an editor.

I would like a first copy of the *Portland Argus* first published in September, 1803, which Nathaniel Willis and Calvin Day started. This paper was established just as all those old newspapers were established just after we became a nation, to serve the interests of a political party, in the case of the *Argus*, the so-called Jacobin or democratic party derisively so called after the liberalists of France. The editor of the *Argus* went to jail for the freedom of his sentiments and he played it to the limit. The *Argus* could appear each week with its flaming leader second, fourth, sixth week (as it might be) of the imprisonment of the editor to avow sentiments of political freedom. The men in the shop also had to work under guard to repel assailants of the other political party, supposed to be lying in wait for them.

I would like a copy of Seba Smith's paper, *The Courier*, issued at Portland in 1829, the first daily paper in Maine. Here was a genius—like John Neal—a humorist, author of the Jack Downing papers, a copy of which I once saw as a boy and whose value I did not then know; probably gone to the scrap-heap, for I saw them in an old house in the country. Seba Smith graduated at Bowdoin in 1818. His wife was Elizabeth Oakes Smith, a most talented writer.

John Neal issued his *Yankee* in 1828, James Adams, Jr., backing it. John Neal was a fiery genius, a transcendentalist, a dreamer, a patriot, a toiler of Titanic power. Mr. Daggett has just written a charming monograph on him that ranks high among the literary productions of the year. Neal feared no man and despised everything but truth and honor.

I would like a copy of Horatio King's old *Jeffersonian* first published at Paris Hill; or a copy of that mysterious Portland publication, *The World in a Nutshell*, that kept its secret as well as did the letters of Junius.

Then, too, who has lying about his garret a copy of the *Eastern Star*, published in Hallowell in 1794, or of Wait & Baker's *Tocsin*, Hallowell, 1795, or of Peter Edes's *Intelligencer* in Hallowell (now Augusta) in about 1795. Peter Edes was a son of Benjamin Edes, the historic Boston patriot and publisher of the Boston Gazette, if I recall. Peter was a lank, thin-legged printer, "spindle shanked," who had the pertinacity of a starved cat. He was forced out of Augusta by poor business and moved to Bangor where he started the *Bangor Weekly Register*, in 1815. I have seen a copy of the old Peter Edes paper. If anyone has one to give away, send it hither. These early papers should be gathered by the Maine Press Association, if possible, and kept in memoriam to the early printers who fought, died and even went to jail in the service of freedom of opinion.

ON "BACK TO THE OLD SCHOOL"



IF YOU go back to your old school these commencement days, the chances are that you will go to the old chapel and look at the seat where you sat on the morning of the first day.

Here is the place! It is very dim here and your eyes can hardly penetrate the distance, except that far up in the arches come rays of light through stained-glass windows that catch the floating pollen of the summer and the tiny dust of the sanctuary and drop like shafts of light on the old black walnut benches. After a while, the eyes accustomed, are at home.

At first it happens that I am alone, but not for long. One by one, others come stealing in, softly as furtive students stole in, late of a morning, long ago. And they stand about in the dimness or sit in some familiar seat or contemplate as one contemplates a shrine. Here is a fellow-townsmen of mine whom I never suspected of sentimentalism whom I find with a tear in his eye, matching the cheeks of others. He says that he never fails to visit chapel on commencement day and always unaccompanied.

I hear someone say that it is as one pays a visit to the grave of his dead youth. Not so! Rather to his living manhood! For it is true that we all go back to our old schools as "boys" and "girls" to celebrate our memories. And what I wish to emphasize is this: Is it not true that the finest memories of old schools cluster about the diviner part of these shrines of a living faith and memorials of the manhood and womanhood of courage and consecration? To me, this is the best proof

that I can summon from old schools of vitality of Faith in God. Here today, as I write in memory of my youth, I do not count it dead but living. There, on that seat, sits now a child called "me." It is forty years ago! His face is unfamiliar; his pockets empty; his clothes mean; his heart timid; his outlook hopeless. I see spring to life long lines of other boys, who today are gray. Did not each of us know his own problems? Did not each heart know its own trouble? And yet! And yet! believe me! I can hear high-intoning the voice of the preacher, the white-haired saint whom I saw lying one fair morning with face to the sea and the peace of God in his eyes—all mysteries revealed, I can hear his voice speaking of the sacred things that kept me on and on. Yea, they encouraged and sustained many a boy, to whom the future held no financial promise even though the comfort were to be found in the "sparrow's fall."

It is all a medley. But it is a shrine. It all brings back the loitering scholar shuffling in to escape the eye of the monitor; the student cribbing his delayed studies under the prayer book; the ruffled hair; the inadequate garb hidden by long coats. And yet we recall little but that deeper religious significance, deeper than we would then have admitted, that we brushed aside as boys and girls and find again among our treasures as the day declines.

O! Boys of the old eighties! You did sneak back into chapel, this year when you went back again to school, did you not? You took your hat off in reverence and stood awhile with a lump in the throat and a tear in the eye as you sought a seat where once a child sat. Who was he! What was he! A homely child,

perchance! A strange looking simulacrum of what is now "you." Poor little homesick onery chap! Poor little devil; poor little cuss. Your pity does you honor if coupled with it is the conviction that it is not merely a matter of forty years. If you were "you" then, and you are "you" now, what may not you be, in some fairer land? How may not God reclothe you? What garb may this indomitable spirit of ours not assume—this thing that dies not but stands aside today and pities and loves and weeps the passing body.

Yes! Yes! I saw it all there in our old chapel, in the dim light and amid the ghostly forms of old boys. I saw victorious crews march up the broad aisle to music. I saw lock-stepped boys, arms about each other, passing out of chapel for the last time as students in the saddest custom of school life! I heard Harry Chapman sing. And I am sure that I saw Faith re-incarnate and the body put under the feet of the spirit and the soul enlarged and the life of man as a span in the infinite. You should always go back to chapel and there bow at the shrine of your eternal youth of spirit, the spirit of your college and your intrepid faith. There are no dead upon these seats among the ghostly lads who seem to shine up with tender faces into yours! For they say to you: "Son of my youth! Be strong! for amid all things that pass there abideth these three, faith, hope, love." And for my part, I can bend over the old, time-worn bench and take the lad to myself and go out quite satisfied with gray hairs, having the lad yet in my heart.

ON "SPRING AND DAISIES"



HIS is a title of one of Leigh Hunt's lovely familiar essays, and none was more simple in his appeal or more fine in his discriminations than this gentle soul who wrote so persistently of the common themes of his times.

His English daisy does not come so far from our common weed as you may suppose, and Englishmen love them so much. We do not affect the Marguerite as they do and we rather dislike it in the fields among the hay crop. But the English cultivate it for its extra large size and its true beauty—one of the loveliest of the common weeds of America. The finer, smaller English daisy we cultivate equally in our gardens.

Leigh Hunt calls on Shakespeare for most of his inspiration in his essay and then runs through all of the poets—so that the daisy of our fields and gardens is probably of all flowers most in poetry. Chaucer has his say; Spenser has his; Shakespeare is at it all of the time; what a wonderful little flower that thus comes and goes and sends the thoughts of all of these poets winging afar!

Of course, after all, it is not the flower at all. It is spring running through the poet's mind. Leigh Hunt says (and see how he wrote much as we might write today): "Then the young green!" This is the most apt and perfect mark of the season—the true issuing of spring. The trees and bushes are putting forth their crisp fans; the lilac is loaded with buds; the meadows are thick with the bright young grass, running into

sweeps of white and gold with the daisies and the buttercups. The orchards announce their riches in a shower of blossoms. The earth in fertile woods is spread yellow and blue with carpets of primroses, violets and anemones, over which the birch trees, like stooping nymphs, hang with their thickening hair. Lilies of the valley, columbines, stocks, lady-smocks and the intensely red peony which seems to anticipate the full glow of summer time, all come out to wait on the season, like fairies from their subterranean palaces. Who is to wonder that the idea of love mingles itself with that of this cheerful and kind time of the year, setting aside even common associations. It is not only its youth and its beauty and budding life and the passion of the groves that exclaim with the poet, "let those love now who never loved before, and those who always loved, now love the more."

But, I did not set out to speak of the spring so much as the daisy. One can write about spring a great deal better in the winter than he can when the fields are "with daisies pied" or "with lady-smocks all silver white." The winter makes me think of spring and fills my throat with all of its longings; while in summer, I see the long sweep of the majestic snows out of hyperborean lands come riding on the gale and with lullaby softer than the cooing birds, lascivious with their love-making.

The Latins called this common white flower of ours with its heart of gold "bellus" or bellis, which means "sweet one," or "nice one," or "beautiful one." The French gave it the same name as that which they give to a pearl, Marguerite, or Margarita, or by way of special endearment, Margherita. Chaucer says of it

in his lovely poem of the Flower and the Leaf, as of the lady who began to sing right womanly a bargaret in the praising of the daisie: "As for me," says Chaucer, "thought I among her notes sweet, she said, 'Si douset est la Margarete.'" In other words the lady said, "Our Margaret is so sweet." Ben Jonson says of them, "Day's-eyes and the lippes of cows."

We cannot make a floral album of the poets. We can, however, go afield this summer with a new love for the common flower that has inspired so much from Chaucer to Burns toward love of Nature. I would in all ways, turn your thoughts in that way—to the yellow and white of fields, to the blue of hills, to the pageant of nature. You will be so much better content at things that you can never change by rebellion or scoldings or reprisals. It would do all of us good to love Beauty more and money less. It would make us all forget so many brief ills of earth, if we loved the common daisy a bit more and saw in Spring something of the revival of our own spirituality.

ON "PEONIES"



SOMETHING sort of choked in my throat today as once again I saw the peonies coming into bloom in the garden, for peonies that bloom have mostly been planted by other hands, long since laid folded away under other blossoms. Grandmother called them "pinies" and they were her treasures, huge red "pinies" that she felt sure to be superior to any other that grew. They blossomed alongside the graveled walk that led up through the little garden of hollyhock, tall and gaudy, peonies red as blood and deep in their hearts the stamens of yet unfolded beauty. We brushed them as we walked and saw them as mere flowers. To her they were as gifts out of her store of God's special beneficence. She took them to church for the minister's desk; she took them to school for the closing day's exhibition; she took them to weddings and funerals and in the old parlor a great mass of them stood in a great blue bowl—pinies, sweet and lovely pinies, that gave her a certain unique standing in the community.

So, I see them today coming along again and I notice how little attention we busier people give to this historic flower—so old as to pass far back into history. Cleopatra may have worn them; other and earlier queens of Asia and Africa may have picked them and pressed them to their bosoms. Queens of the Ming dynasty may have dug about their roots in the long ago; for they came early from lands of the Mongols, the Tartars, the Chinese and all through Southern Europe. I fancy that some early Puritan lifted the peony from the English garden and brought the bulb

along to add a touch of home to the rough world of Plymouth. There are peonies in New England so old that no man knoweth their genesis.

We used to know only the red peony. But it has no finer ancestry than the white peony. Do flowers chiefly take their color from the country—these racial flowers like the peony? The white peony came from snowy Siberia where it was given perfume to compensate it for the loss of that superb and opulent crimson, that fairly sparkles like the deeps of old wine. The snow is in its heart; but the odor of roses is on its effluence. Do you know anything more lovely than the white peony, the tips of its petals slightly violet or pink, deepening into a suspicion of rose, its centre as of pure cream and shading into ivory! Can you fancy anything lovelier than these flowers. And so, admitting their perfection, can you avoid a sense of wonder as to why God made them, unless he intends us all to be finally built up into a similar state of beauty?

I have a peony patch that calls to mind those long since gone. These peonies came from my old home. They were planted long ago in that town by one most dear to me. I always wanted some of them in my garden. One day, unknown to me, some of their roots were brought up here and planted by a friend. It was in the autumn. In the spring they began to grow and when I first saw their blossoms, I thought it was a miracle. I knew them! Great white, wonderful, lovely peonies! Immediately I set about solving the mystery and learned it from my old home. Those peonies blooming so gorgeously carry, therefore, reminiscences beyond any other flower in the world. They speak of a line of succession far back beyond my memory. They

link the present with the past. They call to mind a succession of Junes, dreamy and young, in old gardens, where roses bloomed and apple trees flung their petals about like snow, and lilacs scented the air, and where moonlight lay upon the old flagging that led through the sagging gate to the open door.

Alas and alas! How little we know what may stir our children's children. How little we know what simple thing may be our own memorial. It may be a tall elm in the dooryard, a peony bloom by the garden path. Sufficient if, in some later day, when we are gone and nigh forgotten, someone stirs vagrant memories by recalling us through the simple flower; or stops, in June, to look deep into the heart of the peony, to see once again, the visions of the old homes, and old family circles which time has dissolved, leaving only the perennial of beauty in the flower and in the hearts of children and of children's children.

ON "THE VALUE OF CHARACTER"



COMMERCIAL value of character is my subject—not the spiritual and abstract value, such as it may be.

Years ago, in this city, lived two good men—Deacon William Libbey, first cashier of the Manufacturers National Bank, and Deacon Badger, a customer at that bank. Each was a man of deep, abiding Christian faith, each with character, each a deacon of the Baptist church.

One day, late in the afternoon, Deacon Badger rattled the door of the bank and Deacon Libbey who was still on the job, behind locked doors, saw who it was and opened the door as has been done a thousand times. The customer came in, the cashier passed behind his desk and they did business. As the result, Deacon Badger was passed over through the wicket, in the regular course of business, two hundred dollars, in new banknotes, crisp and crinkly.

Deacon Badger gathered up the money and stood a while talking about church matters. Then he thought himself to count the money as a matter of habit. He always had counted money; he always would.

It was twenty dollars short.

Deacon Libbey took the money over to count in the full amount and he, too, found it twenty dollars short. He looked at Deacon Badger and said, "You have dropped the other twenty on the floor. I gave you ten of them. I counted them twice. Look about a bit. You will find it." Together they searched Deacon Badger's pockets, they searched the floor, the money

drawer; the surroundings. The twenty dollars was gone. Deacon Libbey said that he had given Badger the twenty; Deacon Badger said he had never received it, and so the two old Christians stood like lions at bay, each looking the other in the eye; each declaring that the other was wrong; each beginning to harbor faint suspicions that the other had at last fallen from grace and begun to tread the primrose path that leads to—we all know where.

I have often told this story and it takes on added humor to me each time that I tell it. I can fancy nothing more funny than these two old-fashioned incorruptibles alone there in that bank harboring suspicions each of the other. If you had known them—their type—you would yourself see the humor of it as keenly. They were both genuine goodly men—REALLY good men, I mean.

Deacon Badger could not call Deacon Libbey a liar and a thief, because Deacon Libbey could not call Deacon Badger a liar and a thief. In the tense air of the little bank so many years ago, all that each of these men had for support in the time of trial was the spotless trail behind him. Had Deacon Badger or Deacon Libbey ever so much as leaned once toward wrong, he would have gone down to a dishonored grave, for the solution of the mystery came not until long after both of them had passed on and been laid away in the odor of sanctity. This was the commercial value of character. Only by reason of this was a tragedy averted.

Deacon Badger said to Deacon Libbey, "William, you are a good man. You have never cheated or stolen. There is something about this that we do not understand. I will assume half the loss and you will assume the other half."

Deacon Libbey said to Deacon Badger: "Deacon, I know that you would not intentionally do wrong. I know that I counted the money correctly and that I passed it to you. There is something we do not understand. Possibly God is trying out our capacities for charity to each other, our trust in Him. I will stand half of the loss."

So the old worthies after half an hour of breathless concern, agreed to forget it and each paying his half, went his way to think his own thoughts, ever tinged with the divine injunction, "Judge not, lest ye be judged."

And as the years rolled on they died and the bank had a new cashier and finally outgrew its little quarters and moved over to larger ones. In the process of moving they tore away the old counters over which Deacon Libbey had passed the \$200. And in behind the counter, laid snugly between the mahogany boarding and the back of a drawer was a clean, new twenty dollar bill.

Deacon Libbey's successor knew what it was. Often had the story been rehearsed to him. And he saw at once how it had occurred. In pushing over the new money the thin edge of one of the bank-notes had caught in the crack and the bill had been pushed down into this tiny space. And there it had lain for years and years.

Moral! As you please. But character is worth something.

ON "THE LITTLE VILLAGE"



YOU FIND them now and then, aloof, detached, those old-fashioned little hamlets, untouched, as it would seem, by the urban influence of the times. Dear little places, whose simplicity arouses a longing for their acquaintance and a dream in the back of the head of happiness therein, such as is not to be found in the rush and fret of cities.

There was one as we went along our way the other day, upon which we came unexpectedly and where we lingered awhile shortly after the noon hour, unnoticed, save for a woman shaking a tablecloth from a near-by piazza, and a stray dog or two, that came sniffing around our automobile. And it made us homesick and ruminative. And all of the while the monotone of water running over a little dam by the mill and a clear May sky overhead.

No railroad trains or trolleys run into one of these towns or villages, whichever you may choose to call them. They bask in the May sunshine as peacefully as they ever did and the rows of white houses with green blinds stretch away for a street and peter out into broader gardens and finally into fields. The elms are budding and leafing out. The lilacs are swelling. The dandelions are gemming the lawns with yellow.

There is one store and but one. It has a long veranda with a hitching rail for horses, suggestive of the past. You find much in it that you did not expect to find and fail to find much that you might expect to find. In May, it will not be filled with loafers as it might be in winter, especially in February, just before

town-meeting. Somehow it smells of past worthies and of salt cod and leather boots. It also smells of grindstones, hardware, kerosene oil, chocolate drops, chewing gum, blue denim and corn poppers. I can look it over with my mind's eye and see a freckled-faced lad looking longingly into the fly-specked showcase hungering for penny chocolate cream bars.

There is a mill pond! Ah, so quiet now. Save for the dripping of the cool water over the stones and the twittering of sparrows in the eaves. There is an "ice-cream parlor" which is the only truce to modernity in the place. And for the rest, the home of a village doctor who rides all over the surrounding country and who lives in a little white house with a sagging piazza, back of some apple trees in a scrubby front yard and whose yard is full of children. There is a blacksmith shop even yet in this village, though the ruts of the road are made by automobile and the blacksmith is willing to tinker the tin-lizzies as they come his way. The pond comes up to the street almost and the mill race empties into it, on the near side of the bridge.

The churches lift their spires; for there are always at least two of them. The schoolhouses fly their flags. The grange hall stands barn-like but suggestive of village oratory and happy socials. The cornshop is empty in May, but makes us think of busy days of August. The wind ruffles the waters of the pond. The clouds float fleecy-like overhead.

Here, then, is a town, untouched by time. It holds within its guardian love the elements of old New England country life. It has no secrets from itself. It knows all of its own pains, hopes, griefs, births, deaths,

accidents, disappointments and successes. It calls itself by its first name. It reads daily papers, but there are yet some who "take in" a weekly, from the neighboring shire town. It lives keenly and yet might do better in that respect. For how little it appreciates the hills that beckon; the peace that sings it to sleep; the birds that carol of a dawn; the high noon of sleepy, dozy dreaminess; the starlit nights when Arcturus winks in cloudless, dust-proof skies and the rainy Hyades belie the night. How little, indeed, it realizes the manifold blessings of its own aloofness—away from markets and from mischief; away from care and fret of contact with problems of the times; away from the passions of life, its call to the hatred of competition and the fight for subsistence. Here nature with her generous hand spreads the table of the poor as well as of the rich; here the realms of God come close to earth and mingle with it in a thousand ways. Here one might rest—yes, even rest.

ON "A PERSONAL MATTER"



WUZ jest a week ergo terday, ut I come home an' hit the hay; I warn't sick! Fer, ez I said ter you, 'twarn't the pip an' 'twarn't the flu; jest a feelin' restless-like, waitin' fer the hour to strike, when I'd leave the harnts of men, and fish an' be a boy agen.

Wa-a-l! Here I be, jest ez I was; hain't no reason, hain't no cause, hain't got no tempera-toor, hain't got no disease, fer sure; more like a onery aillin' pup; nothin' seems ter chirk me up; looked myself square in the face an' couldn't diagnose the case; called in the Doc, young Doc Joe. He says, "Inter bed yer go!" Here I be jest ez I was, hain't no reason, hain't no cause.

'Tain't my head; fer I think right smart; 'tain't my liver an' 'tain't my heart; 'tain't stomach ner gout! Then, gol darn me, 'tain't nuthin' at all, as I kin see. An' yet here I lay, like a caow that's cast, without no trouble that's like ter last. Thought I'd found what the matter wuz; waitin' fer the bee ter buzz; but hain't perked up a little bit an' don't seem to keer if the bird don't flit; got no time ter lissen for crows, all I kin do is blow my nose; don't keer a rap ef the ducks do swarm; too darn busy keepin' warm; ain't concerned erbout the vi'lets bloom, couldn't smell their sweet perfume; what's the use of the woods, in yer eager ear, if yer head's plugged up and yer fail ter hear. By thunder! I wonder! what's the matter, me jest a layin' here, flatter an' flatter! By snum, I'm so sore in spots, reckon I must hev the botts; every time I blow my nose, it pulls a toe nail off'n my toes; my eyes

both ache like an old burnt boot an' they're dancin' a clog on the bridge of my snoot; an' I don't want ter eat and I don't want ter drink, an' I don't want ter sleep an' I hate ter think, thet after what I said ter you, 'tain't the pip an' 'tain't the flu.

Jest outside my winder pane, I kin see a wintry plain and a tall spruce tree that stands, bearing snows within its hands; and a barberry, crimson-red, with the frosts upon its head, and a long an' windin' hill, storm-swept, driftin' cold an' still, tall elms, arms like tattered sails bendin' to the winter gales, clouds that come a bendin' low, spittin' little flakes of snow; sun gone down an' in my room nothin' but a touch o' gloom; many little gales that come, beat my windows like a drum; and they offen bring, ter me, far-off roarin' like the sea.

So after manner o' my kind I can sorter be resigned; no man ain't exactly shet of everything that he can't get. If with Spring, the world ain't dressed, p'raps we'll favor winter best; here I be jest ez I was, hain't no reason, hain't no cause, but I kin shut my eyes, yer know, an' see the pine trees fight the snow, and seem to rest all snug an' still, on some wind-swept, pastur-hill; an' dream of lyin' safe and warm, well away from earthly harm. Funny how yer fancy builds camp-fires on these snowy hills. Funny how there's offen gain, when yer bones is full of pain. Funny what yer visions do, even when you've got the flu. Funny how the banners dip, even when you've got the pip. 'Tain't so drefful hard to lie, with your business passin' by; ef, by snum, yer only knew, 'TWUZ the pip, er 'TWUZ the flu.

ON "THE ETIQUETTE OF SWIMMIN' "



IF I REMEMBER aright we had a high sign, useful in the slow hours of the afternoon in the old schoolhouse when the flies droned on the window pane and bumble bees came sailing on lazy wing past the sun-swept vista through the open windows. It may have been June; probably was. It may have been a drowsy day when nature was surfeiting herself with sweets and when the cow-bell tinkled afar, suggesting velvet meadows and rioting buttercups and boys stretching on the sward, with waiting cur-dogs round about, loafing, too. What a liar was he who said "time flies." Time halts in such circumstance. Time moves backward in its flight, on such a day. The old clock never budes, as a boy with bursting head, waits the time when he shall leap forth, every fibre suddenly animated, every corpuscle rioting.

In those moments, with everything calling, with thoughts of laving in waters that shall curl through our toes and cool our backs we threw the high sign, over the school. Two fingers of the right hand held up in the form of a "V"—the other fingers closed. Immediately, the faces clear; the sign runs silently around the room. Frowsy red-heads lift. Freckle-faced boys become young Apollos. Animation takes the place of despondency and we know that there will be doings at the old swimmin' hole.

It hath never been determined how old this sign may be. I doubt not it is three hundred or four hundred years old. I doubt not that boys still use it.

Cæsar may have swung the high sign aloft when he put up a proposition to bathe with his classmates in the Tiber or Horace in the Digentia. But at least it has made many a boy happy. You do not have to be reminded how it eased the slow toiling hours of the afternoon. You do not have to be reminded with what a shout we burst out of the schoolhouse and away, cap in hand and trousers ready to fall at the sight of open water. Nor do you require much reminder of happenings at the old swimmin' hole.

There was etiquette about it. Last one in! First one out! Do I have to remind you of what sometimes happened. Much of it was primal. Much of it was animal—for boys are animals. We wore little but a pair of trousers and a cotton shirt with galluses strapped over the back most always made of cotton and never "boughten." We wore no underclothes in summer, no shoes or stockings, and we required little preparation for the bath. In early spring a boy was fortunate if he could have his head shingled and thereby avoid the troubles of drying his hair. For it was sometimes a troublesome matter—the number of times a boy went in swimmin' in any given day. And mother often had a way of feeling of a boy's hair.

If there were no tragedies at the swimmin' hole I am a liar. Many a boy have I seen who, having offended a brother, comes late from the water to find his clothes tied in knots. And believe me, a boy at one end of a cotton shirt-tail and another boy at the other, both pulling in opposite directions, can do a deal of knottiness. Oft have we seen, all of us, a bawling boy, shivering in the wind, trying to untie the knots in his shirt or trousers, while the other boys chased home over the

meadows. There was etiquette about diving and about taking turns and about swimmin' under water and coming up under a boy and about pulling him under and about splashing water upon him when he had dried off.

I heard the other day about a family of boys where they were not allowed to go in swimming until July 1st. The father of these children is a doctor. I can't understand it. How any father can believe that he can keep boys from going in swimming until the coming of July 1st, beats my reckoning. Of course when I was a boy we did not have baths in winter at all. The wash tub was frozen and the pump was not fitted with hot water. Mother used to give us the once-over Saturdays in winter—sometimes. She could not, dear soul, find time to chase a lot of boys around and make them bathe. So we always appointed Memorial Day as the date for the first swim, no matter how cold the water. I don't remember of dying or being drowned. We always took a boat and went down river and had a picnic and went in swimming, on the side. Our ablution was a monster and our reaction was a fright. I have shaken so on cold Memorial Days that my teeth loosened.

But it was a part of our etiquette—the same as the high sign, same as the punishment for snobby boys, and as the other rules of every-day swimmin'. I expect to go to Heaven. I expect to swim in the river of life some time. But I never expect to be happier even there, than I have been when the fingers went up, over the little old schoolhouse, and we leaped forth, a gang of boys, for the old swimmin' hole.

ON "GOING BERRYING"



IF ALL things, the most conducive to philosophy and invention is going berrying. It is an intellectual pursuit mingled with practical acquisition. It comes in the class with deep-sea fishing, bee-hunting, digging clams and writing poetry. It cannot be exactly classified. It is—just berrying.

From the general consideration of this important subject, I exclude strawberrying. I call that work. It does not classify with any other kind of berrying. You have to dig down in the long grasses where no breezes blow and sweat and stifle with hay-fever to pick strawberries. Nobody who is over eight years old can enjoy bending over to pick strawberries. Raspberrying has its objectionable features. The berries grow in difficult masses and the biggest berries are always in the centre of the bushes. To reach them, one must shut his eyes; grab his pants tightly around him; hang onto his coat-tails, and with a selection from the scripture by way of comfort, dash through the barbed wire entanglements to the point of raspberry objectives. I prefer blackberries as a matter of determination. The spines are more spur-like, it is true, but one can circumvent the high bush blackberry better than he can a bunch of treacherous raspberries. It is an exercise of pure strategy to pick blackberries and you get something when you reach them. They are not all squash-bugs and sometimes ten of them will fill a pint dipper.

The best berrying is the huckleberry—the high bush huckleberry. Next to that give me the blueberry. You can sit down to the blueberry; you can stand to the

huckleberry. No briars, no stooping, no squash-bugs, but only a wind-swept knoll where no wild thyme grows—or something like it, and there you go to it and strip the glossy black berry called the huckleberry and hear them go tinkling into the pail.

But this is not the thing. The thing in blueberrying or huckleberrying is the fun of it. It is best to go alone or to take some young person with you. It is unwise for two grown people to go huckleberrying together. It degenerates into a thing approaching work. What you want is a quiet, freckle-faced boy about ten years old. He will afford you opportunity for philosophic divagation. He will give you opportunity to think. He will call on you for information on common things. He will assist you in loafing. He will want to run about and stand on hilltops and let the wind blow around his ears and speculate on the clouds and ask what makes the humming sound when the breezes stir the pines. A boy is not so particular about filling his pail that he will not have time to chase a woodchuck. By all means take a small boy. Never go huckleberrying with your wife or anybody else's wife. It is no fun.

So far as I am concerned, it is not a matter of getting the berries. It is the semi-contemplative mood that hypnotizes me into complete acquiescence with the plan of nature when I go berrying, that catches me every time I see a berry-patch. It provides you just enough physical relaxation to induce thought. It sets your mental machinery going just like a fine new dynamo running in the bath of a lubricant. It is not exactly "thought" that you do; it is that lovely, beautiful, delicious state of mind known as "meditation."

You pick a berry and you do it unconsciously while you see the cloud, hear the bee, watch the butterfly, wondering all the while about everything. On one hand, you have the physical action of a gentle sort; on the other you have the meditation and, the two combined, superinduce a state of such perfect equilibrium that you feel like a sleeping street of a country village in noon of a September day. It's the poise that you get. You can't get it anywhere else. You settle questions about life that never could be settled elsewhere—settle them for yourself, I mean, not for other people.

Yes: Fishing is fun; hunting is fun; golf is sometimes fun; but all piffle as compared with the rare and unusual avocation of blueberrying and huckleberrying. When the sky is full of clouds, when the sun is warm and the wind is fresh; after the hay is in and before the snows come—go berrying. And come home with a full mind, whether the pail be empty or not.

ON "THE OLD PEDLERS' CART"



FRIENDLY correspondent recalls to me the old-fashioned tin-pedler as a fading memory—possibly still traveling up and down the macadam roadways, but by and large—becoming extinct.

I have wondered if it is not, perhaps, a distinct service to preserve memories of these old-fashioned things. As the days come and go, it does seem as tho there come more frequent responses from readers along the line of those things that seem to recall the quaint features of that simpler New England life, such as occasional letters, frequent passing comment. It is as tho recollection stirred deeper sympathies and the finer instincts of those who love to recall the days that are gone. Perhaps if someone who has the faculty, were to write a book on old Maine habits, customs, social life, dress, peculiarities and penchants, it might in some day be of value to historians and even to scholars.

I seem to remember swift-flying feet from down the dusty road and the voice of a brother shouting, "The Pedler's here!" and to see thru the leafy barrage of the apple trees the red sheen of the pedler's cart drawn up before our old back door. To those who dwelt far in the country, the dust of the pedler's cart was never unwelcome as his slow-shuffling old gray horse—it seems always to have been gray—came our way. It was a terrible disappointment if we boys were away fishing, or after the cows, or at the swimmin' hole, when the pedler came. He had Jonathan Crookes knives, for instance, and altho we had small

chance of getting one, it was a pleasure to see one. He had drawers that pulled out of the back of his cart that had treasures far beyond the dreams of avarice. He had a silent way of indifference about him that never seemed to sit well on a person acquainted with such ineffables.

The old tin pedler's cart was always about the same in appearance; high over the horse; seat perched well up in the air; top covered with barrels and pails perched on stakes; bait for the horse; bundles of rags and barter from the house-wife; butter kits; firkins; and for the rest a smooth, well-enclosed vehicle almost always painted red. Just beneath the seat was the name of the pedler (sometimes—not always) and usually these mystic letters, "Licensed by C. C."—what it meant, a mystery to me now as then—but variously interpreted, until at last we came to consider it a special fact to be aired among boys; to be mentioned as a show of information and to be hollered out behind the cart as it went along the way. The pedler had a very slow method of trade. Mother always came out and stood under the apple-tree with her apron up under her arms and in summer little beads of sweat on her chin—very anxious to have her tussle at trade and barter with the pedler. Mother was a very shrewd buyer—so we thought. How she would haggle and debate with the peddler. Didn't she give him some good ones! How we would chuckle and roll on the grass and shout as she talked back to him and told him how high his prices were and what a cheat he was. The pedler would unlock the side of the animal that he called a cart, but which we thought more wonderful than the wooden horse that captured Troy and

that we knew about in our school books. The insides of the creature fairly shone with tin pans and pots and kettles and brooms and crocks and pails and churn-dashers and wooden butter bowls and butter stamps and strainers and mortars and pestles and coffee-grinders and tea-pots and glass ware and well—what was there not? Never was such glistening tin-ware; it does not shine so dazzlingly, nowadays.

And then he would go around to the back of the cart and open up the back-doors and begin to pull out little drawers in the contraption—such stores of essential domesticities! Thread and needles; pins and hair-pins; hanks of linen thread — cutlery, jack-knives—oh, dear! It is like a dream—all of it, out there with mother a regular spendthrift of egg-money and the savings of the meagre cash that came to her hand. Such eggs as she would pass over to the pedler in barter! Such butter as she would lovingly pack into the pedler's bucket for him to sell at the village store, whither he was traveling. Eggs that now are worth their weight in gold; butter that, in our house, had the sweetness of the clover and the fragrance of the honey of the honey-comb.

Under the apple-trees with the bees a-humming and the branches swaying and the old horse with loosened head-stall cropping the lush greensward of the old door-yard; only a picture out of the past! The pedler has gone. The old farm has gone. The old folks are gone. What remains! Only the memories that are sacred! Nothing whatever left to us, save the hope that the picture may be flashed on the screen again, elsewhere! with the pedler's nag cropping the pastures

of the Asphodel; mother again in the foreground with apron in her folded arms, and the visualization as permanent as the eternities themselves!

ON "THE VAGABOND"



HE is no mere tramp, carrying his rags and his urbanity all over the earth, reading newspapers, riding on trains, merely escaping the servitude of work, without losing the crowds and the impulse of others.

The Vagabond is none of these. Those who think so, lose sight of the crown and sceptre of the vagabond. The vagabond carries his soul with him and is a vagabond because he would take his soul out into the open and give it freedom under the clear airs of heaven.

It is a primal force, this vagabondage. Some nations have been vagabonds from time immemorial and may be time without end. They are nomad from inheritance; they live under the stars and in the deserts or on mountain sides where one mountain is like another, each calling as to some dear distant pasture which is ever yet more beautiful. Free highlanders have ever been the most delightful and warlike of vagabonds as have certain nations who have been vagabonds of the sea. These are the rovers who have never any joy, except in things beyond the horizon, strange ports won after struggle, idyls in spice-lands, dreams of royal delights under languorous moons.

Every person whom you see moving around, is not alive. Far from it. Some merely exist; others are

quite dead. They have a fixity of life comparable to the cucumber-vine that never gets beyond the spread of its root. "Afoot and light-hearted," sings Walt Whitman, "I take to the open road. Healthy and free, the world before me, the long brown path leading wherever I choose. Henceforth, I ask not good fortune—I, myself, am good fortune. Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing. Strong and content, I travel the open road. * * * The soul travels. The body does not travel so much as the soul. The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts away, at last, for the journeys of the soul. Allons! The road is before us! it is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well." This is the song of Life, the voyaging of the soul and body; the epic of vagabondage.

I would not counsel over much vagabondage—possibly there is enough as it is, except the swimming of the soul beyond the limits of the shore which costs but little either of time, money or effort; but unlimited roving amid contemplation lessens production. It is the lotus life. Yet there is plenty of excuse. Nature is very much of a vagabond. All things with wings are of vagabondia; tumbling bees, loitering butterflies, evening breezes ruffling the lilacs and sending vagabond perfumes stealing over the memories of one's vagabond heart. Things that come across a summer day, such as painted moths and jeweled humming-birds, hopping toads on quests of the Infinite; floating gulls white as snow against the blue, eagles in the air, distant sails on summer seas, tides against the shore, coming from other limits of earth,—no matter where

you are, summer or winter, whether it be the vagabond rain-drops out of the sky, or the snow-flake that comes whirling down, as tho the angels were moulting,—all vagabond!

Man is truly vagabond—not a tramp but out-journeying with his soul for company—only when he has mastered the truth that his Spirit is himself. He has become initiate with Life and will set out to build more stately mansions for his soul. He need not go far. A little way around the corner, if it please him. He may not be gone for such a time as to be missed from home. He may not sleep out of a night—altho we should advise it for the soul's good. He may not go farther than a forest of trees, that merely shuts out the light of the town and lets only the upper-radiance filter in; sobeit, his soul gets the benefit—he is of vagabondia. The vagabond takes no vows, but will learn all that vows could require—humility, gentleness, a song, a smile, a love-light in his eyes—for Love is a vagabond of vagabonds.

I wish that all men and women would be vagabond some of the time. I wish that they would untie themselves from all of their pet illusions, the necessities of etiquette that mean nothing, the frumpery of toys and trumpets, and seek the beautiful secret of rest in this life, instead of waiting for it in the next. One need not go far. I do not urge a racketing around the world. But out there, outside of the ceaseless consideration of bank-balances; outside of the struggle for preferment; outside of the immediate issues of the day, there are hills, forests, pastures, the golden rapture of filtering lights and shades, and brooks and rivers and blue peaks and songs that sing thru forests

as thru Æolian harps, set in niches of temples. And out there are comradeships and people that come and go, and souls that shiver at the thought of solitude.

ON "MY FIRST JACKKNIFE"



WAS about as big as a pint of cider—sweet cider, of course, to be within the law—and it was my first term in the grammar school, seven years old, barefoot in summer, and naturally big-eyed in a new school.

I declare I never knew anything about scholarship prizes until one day the teacher, whose name was Julia Baker, and whom the boys called "Judy," took me on her lap and told me that I had won the prize for the first year of scholarship. And then she put in my sweaty little hand a new Jonathan Crookes jackknife, if you know what a Jonathan Crookes jackknife was fifty years ago! None better! None COULD be better! Two blades! keen, bright, shining, good stuff! No other boy's knife could cut it, according to the old trick of putting edges together and seeing which edge could cut the other. Honor, dignity, good repute, a certain "class" rested on the boy who had a genuine Jonathan Crookes with its name stamped on the blade. There were traditions of "Barlows," but Jonathan Crookes would do! You bet!

Swift feet took me home that day, swift-flying feet to the anticipated plaudits of home, to the comfort of mother's arms, to the joy of father's good word, to the envy of brothers, to the high-stepped autocracy of

the neighborhood. I reckon I didn't take that knife around much that day. I kept it on the "mantel-piece" and kept going to it every hour to see if it were safe.

Well! Life is a curious thing in the matter of possessions. I think sometimes that it is worth while to go without that you may enjoy the occasional prize well won. It is not well to shower toys on children lest they become cloyed—or as they used to say, "clide." But there was small fear in those days, as I recall. A jackknife, brand-new, was as a king's patent. No boy in my social set had its equal.

Three days passed and I began to gain sufficient temerity to carry the Jonathan Crookes about with me in my trousers pocket. And then, one summer day, not one week after I got the knife, which was in July, I went berrying on the shores of Woolwich. The day passed comfortably. From time to time I felt for my knife and found it secure. Every hour I took it out and looked it over to see if its brightness were fading or if I were using it carelessly on damp twigs, that were liable to rust it. It shone, ineffably.

And then, well along toward dusk, I felt for it and—my blood stopped in its courses, the sky and the river and the trees faded and the world grew black. It was gone! Gone! Gone! and there a hole, just new-grown, in the corner of my pocket!

You needn't smile! This was the tragedy of my life. You possibly have had similar ones. Tell them, if you please, and I will listen. But this one—alas! never anything else compared with it. I came to my senses and recalled feeling something slip down my

leg. I thought I knew where I was when this happened. I fled back blindly over rocks; thru brambles; in circles, here, there, everywhere, searching, and the night coming on. Not a trace of it. Often since then I have tried to picture myself, a child running frantically over that wild, deserted region, mile on mile of bare rocks, thick underbrush, blueberry, blackberry and raspberry bushes, searching for that knife and sobbing like a fountain choked with weeds. I can see myself finally at a standstill, hope all gone, desolate, bereft, alone by the silent river, rather pathetic viewed impersonally, and later pulling the skiff home in the gathering night. I recall the frantic searchings of my family; the stories of the hunting party, thinking I was drowned, and I remember the scene as I told my tale in the apron of my mother.

Many other days I searched those cliffs in vain. The little two-blader lies there today in rust. I never had another Jonathan Crookes. Nobody said: "Never mind; we'll get you another." Parents did not do things that way in those days. I fought out my disappointment and, by degrees, won against it; but a part of my little boy's heart lay with the Jonathan Crookes for many a day thereafter—tho perhaps I personally was strengthened and matured by its loss. Who can tell! Perhaps that was why I had it and why I lost it. We often grow richer by the things we lose, rather than by the things we have. Do not those whom we lay away with a piece of our hearts about them sometimes strengthen and bless us from where the grasses lift and the bluebells wave above them? I think so.

ON "OLD-TIME BREAKING OUT OF ROADS"



AFTER a storm in old New England days, the roads were broken out with teams of oxen, breasting the deep drifts and burying their noses often half out of sight, while the winds flirted the snows and blew them high—a gay sight for those who love the pictures of battling elements.

I have counted twenty yokes of oxen on the lead trailing a huge triangle, that was drawn by main strength thru the piled-up barricade of cold, pure whiteness. On the sled rode the surveyor, giving his orders, while none but trained teamsters waved the oxgoads, their pants tucked in their boots, their faces red with the tang of the New England air, their scarves, usually red, blowing behind them like blotches of blood against the ermine of the snow. These teamsters needed but few words; they knew their teams; for long experience in the woods had made the team and teamster act as one. The mingled words of command to the cattle made a sound of polyglot. You could hear them coming afar, with an occasional low of an ox, or the shout of a surveyor breaking clear on the frosty air as the team breasted a huge drift that called on all for united effort.

The community sentiment in the breaking-out of roads was suggestive, and it always seemed wonderful that with so many men and so many oxen, the teamwork could be effected in a village where there were no telephones; but it was a matter of understanding and pre-arrangement. The teamsters knew that they

and their oxen would be needed after the night of the storm, when the winds had wailed and the windows had rattled and the eaves had moaned and the windows that looked out of the house had been darkened. The man of the house always bedded the cattle down a little better; gave a little extra grain to the oxen and was ready bright and early with the breaking of the storm for the attack. Sometimes it came with the dawn; sometimes with the noon—immediately the sun, then came the breaking-out teams.

A correspondent who writes us often of the old days, recalls the route of his district in Oxford County, Me., where the district started at Timothy Walker's barn and ended at Bethel town line. It might as well be any other district as this, either in Maine or Vermont or old Massachusetts. He says that altho the prohibitory law was working in Oxford County in those days, now and then an oasis appeared even in the bone-dry districts and the old hotel was a rendezvous, maybe an inducement at the end of the route. Here on breaking-out days, a roaring fire burned in the old open fire-place, one of those monsters of rock-maple that threw heat dry, radiant, alive (as wood-fire blaze seems peculiarly to be), out into the open room where the teamsters gathered, stomping the snow from their feet and laying aside their frozen mittens and scarves. There was a bar, in the corner—yes, a bar! Here "George" stood, ready and waiting; a red-faced George, fat and smiling, spicy and succulent "George." The cattle smoked with steam in the yard, swinging their heads, many of them blanketed and some of them fed with small wisps of hay. The crowd that had followed the teams flocked into the hotel. The air was

in motion with the going and coming. The women came from the kitchen to see friends. Gossip passed to and fro from all over the district. Aches and pains and "doing well" or "rather poorly" were the phrases most often heard. The jokers had their way. The odor of nutmeg and other obsolete perfume, was on the air. If they "stayed to dinner" it was a great affair. Yes! They had fun; and they did service and they enjoyed it, and they were strong men and the women of strong men. And the hotel-yard was always well broken out.

Cold did not frighten people much in those days. It is only a few years ago, seemingly, that we all went to the "oyster supper and a dance," at Chase's Mills—a mere sleigh ride of twenty miles below zero, with a girl tucked in by your side, and with a fast horse and the sleigh-bells all in tune, team after team, all in a race, up to the hotel, out and into the warmth of the fire, a dance in the hall, a supper, a dance after intermission, until the day began to break and home again—none the worse for the evening and no cripples in the bunch. Many a sleigh-ride have we seen with sixty turn-outs in it, all off for a dance until daylight, to a four-piece orchestra—down and up the outside; down and up the middle.

Do we break out much of any nowadays? Very little! Life is being arranged so that even the snow is jazzed out of place by machinery. We are avoiding the drifts. We are softened by the fear of contact with the eager air. I am not going to get into the habit of bemoaning the old days. The present are lovely—many of them better than the old; but the breaking-out team does typify an element of that stern

old life, that was not afraid of discomforts; that never shirked the toil; that never feared the cold; that found fun where it was to be found, and that perhaps tasted sweeter companionship with your grandmother, fair and red-cheeked as a girl, tucked under the buffalo robe for a ten-mile sleigh ride to the music of the bells, than daughter does today, in an electric-heated coupe, behind closed windows, while the young man smokes a cigarette and dallies with the gas.

ON "WHEN THE MINISTER CAME"



IN OLD New England the most important event in the household was the coming of the minister. He was apportioned to households, during protracted meetings, quarterly conferences and occasionally for mere pastoral visits to the community, agreeable to him and his scantily-fed wife—an ekeing out also of his salary, by way of savings.

The Bible says of the Master, "Take no thought of what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink." But with certain casuistry, the housewife looked at this strictly from the minister's point of view. He was supposed to be following the direction of the Master confidently and the housewife did not intend that Faith in the providence of the Lord should suffer thru her inadequacy. If the minister was to come in confidence, and without heed as to what he should eat or drink, she must do the cooking or the minister would be taking his Faith to another market and she would be in disgrace in the Sewing Circle.

So there was tremendous preparation. The kitchen fairly rang with the batter of spoons on tin-ware while the trot of the good mother's footsteps gave no latitude to boys-under-foot. Father kept to the barn and went around with a subdued look of impending religion on his countenance. He knocked off swearing and the general conversation at the table was given a brushing up. "You must not say such things" was the common reproof. "You MIGHT forget and say it when the minister was here"—a mild hypocrisy, common enough in life and not altogether reprehensible, for it is good as far as it goes. Father sometimes cut out chewing fine-cut for a day or so, and nibbled at B. L. instead; as being more orthodox and hard-shell than fine-cut. Father always kept pretty still on the prelude to the minister's coming because mother generally remarked that she might—not that she would have, bless her soul—but she might have married a minister once, or at least a chap who afterwards became a minister. Father sang small and, as I have said, kept to the barn. The cattle, at least, understood him. So did mother.

Of course, in every old-fashioned New England family, everybody took a general bath, before the minister came, and the blue wash-tub was the busiest utensil in the family. Everybody from Sis to Bub was given the twice over; everybody worked but father; he went round as he was.

Children considered the minister's coming as a mixed blessing—the bitter being a repression of animus, the sweet being an expression of appetite. One could not talk so much, but that was given over willingly for the opportunity to eat more. Savory

odors, long smelt, never tasted, came to fruition. "Preserves" came out! A friend of mine, who was brought up on an old-fashioned baby-farm (they were common in olden days), recalls the barberry jam that was produced only when the minister came. He says that the little chaps on the "farm" never tasted it at other times and that they never permitted any to go to the dish-pan. They did the Jack Spratt act. It would have made a picture for Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby, at Squeer's school; those little urchins lapping the plates of the bright red barberry jam after the holy man had filled his stomach tight and then gone away to preach a sermon on "Feed My Lambs."

Such things as happened when the minister visited! Folk lore should be full of them, whereas we have chiefly the rather profane "Woodchuck story" where the boy simply HAD to get the woodchuck because the anathematized minister was coming to the house. We were sanctimonious little "cusses," so to speak, when the minister came. And what a tremendous impression it made on our lives. There is a man in our town who recalls that on his first trip to Boston, with his distinguished uncle, a great lawyer of National fame, now dead, he was set down at a wondrous table in a great New York hotel and given his choice of viands. And the poor little chap, with no other standards except the "minister's visits" as great occasions, ordered what mother used to cook for the minister—cold boiled ox-tongue. Yes! That was the best thing we knew of—appropriate to the orthodox! Cold tongue, soft and soothing, eminently innocent; in life a symbol, in death a food! A little chap cannot invent viands, beyond his experience.

The minister "eats around" now but infrequently. Bishops dine out and have difficulty in holding the napkin upon their shiny aprons. Hotels are not inappropriate to the clergy. Homes are closed tighter than in old New England days. Lucky if the old days were back; for then we of the pews might get more of the spirit and the clergy more of the flesh. The home circle certainly does need more irruptions of grace, both before and after meat.

ON "THE PUSSY WILLOW"



AYBE you have already seen children coming along the streets that lead homeward from the outlying brooks and ponds these March days, with arms full of pussy-willows, and you have felt suddenly tender again toward life and considerate of how steadily the calm world of Nature pursues her way, unvexed by all of the ant-like skurrying to and fro, of man and nations of men. Out of the past rise memories of yourself as a child searching for the first signs of the little furry catkins and eagerly bringing them home, to tempt again the old-time miracle of faith; that if put where it was *exactly* warm enough—in the cuddly toe of a little shoe by the warm fireside—out of the night and all its wonders, might emerge, by way of the immaculate conception of the pussy-willow, a dear little roly-poly kitten, with very bright eyes and a spiky little tail firmly standing erect, waiting there or else rolling over (kitten, tail and all) before the fire when you arose in the morning. Disappointment never raised a doubt. There was ever a reason and ever a failure.

So we see, each recurring spring, the coming of the children, bearing the pussy-willow as a rite and religion of childhood, of the spirit of resurrection, in the very heart of the world. And the pussy-willow has a perfect right, of its own dear little self, to have a place of distinction in the episode. For it is first on the spot; first of all vegetation to feel the kiss of the lovely Sprite that tiptoes first to the brookside and along the oozy borders of the ponds. Here, screened from March gales and winter snows, in response to touch of spring, the pussy-willow puts off her brown winter coat and begins to glisten in the furry little coat that is so soft, warm and beautiful. And it is odd that where Spring first finds her way out, there she also departs, for, along the borders of the pond, the last glimpse of vegetation endures in autumn, as it shows first in the spring.

Another thing that may interest us all about our little friend the pussy-willow, is that childhood, everywhere, the world over, has the same love for it. There is not a place in the world where the willow does not grow in some form. It is along the equator, in the far-off polar regions as far as any vegetation whatever endures of the tree-type, and with many uses, from material for weaving baskets and reeds to making charcoal and bringing great returns to some people who have raised the willow commercially. In olden days, it was used instead of the palm in the church festivals and appropriately as a symbol of the resurrection, for it has strange powers latent within it. You can hardly kill a willow twig. Put it away and allow it nearly to dry and desiccate and yet put it into the earth and give it moisture and from the bare

twig will set out roots and buds and it will struggle into fresh green again in the bravest and most resolute way. It has a singular reserve in leaf-buds. It keeps many of them against day of need. If fire sweeps in willow, or it becomes parched by drought and seemingly dies, the first touch of moisture will start out the reserve buds and again it is on its way as tho nothing had happened. You have seen the willow-tree cut off at its base and left in a condition that would discourage the ordinary tree; and yet, in a year or two, there it is again, all foliage, springing from the slender withes about the trunk.

After the children have brought in the pussy-willow and the miracle of spring is on its way, the catkins become either silver or yellow. You find them swollen and fat. The golden ones are loaded with the stamens; the silver with the pistils. And soon the bees are busy; flying from the silver to the gold, fertilizing them with the pollen on their feet, while they get the first honey of the new year. And then, by and by, much later in the year, the willows are again shining in the golden light with long, waving burdens of the seeds that float away on land rivers and are so prolific that by nature's scheme if one in a billion lodges happily and grows, the balance of nature is preserved, so far as the pussy-willow tree is concerned.

So—here it is again, the new March-time in the arms of childhood, coming down the street, the pussy-willow! Wonder what is within the furry coat! What mystery of life; what casket of the Lord God's own placing! "Who knoweth the balancings of the clouds and how thy garments are warm when He quieteth the earth by the south wind? Hath the rain

a father and who hath begotten the drop of dew?" How little we know—less even than Job! Little children know more than we—for they at least see miracles in the pussy-willow—while we often pass even the little children by and see no miracles, only Things.

ON "CARVING ONE'S FIRST TURKEY"



OF COURSE no one expects ever to carve another turkey—the bird is extinct at the price; but historically a disquisition on the subject may while away a moment of your time.

Your job lay before you. Down the board gleamed a pile of white linen with waiting faces of children. It was your first attempt. The book told you how to do it; first take your fork; jab it into the breast; take the drumstick firmly in your hand; insert the knife in the second joint and give it a spry twist and lo! the wing falls into the platter.

Cross hands, fork in the right hand; knife in the left—carve off the white meat, gently dislocating the bird at all of its anatomical points of vulnerability, all of the time keeping up a running fire of brisk conversation, telling the latest stories and congratulating the ladies upon their youth and beauty.

This is the way the book tells you, but the way you do it is different. You grab the knife in your right hand at imminent danger of cutting the man's throat next to you. You pull up your sleeves, pull down your vest; draw a long breath and try to still the

ominous throbbing in your ears. You make a jab at the bird with a fork and it slips off, and thru the mist of the declining year you hear the voice of your wife saying, "Perhaps, dear, if you took the fork instead of the steel it might go into the bird better."

It is too bad that the age of a turkey is not written upon its breast in indelible ink or some other form of proper certificate. It is usually the oldest birds that lie in wait for the young Benedict's first Thanksgiving. If there is an antique in the turkey orchard about to die, he unquestionably selects his burial place in the family of the young man who is to entertain. 'Tis thus that he gets his revenge. They do need such a lot of carving. They are such wear-resisters. They are so strong on the rush line and have such a strong secondary defence that it is almost impossible to make distance on them in anything like three downs. They are more apt to break thru the rush line and tackle you in the shirt front.

It is strange how all of the old Thomas Turkeys fall to amateur carvers at holiday seasons. It must be because they are so fair to look upon and thus so easily deceive the amateur buyer who does not know that often beneath a rugged exterior in fowl there lies a tender heart. The age of turkeys and geese should be indelibly carved on their breasts. It is an analogy. Tough things fall usually to the inexperienced. Every job that we tackle first in life is hard. Nobody ever went to work at a new job, without having the hardest bird to tackle, first day out. If you get your bird dislocated without landing him in the lap of the guest of honor and without having to get under the table to catch him as he goes around for the third

time, you are lucky—the first carving. If you don't splash gravy on the dado and stuffing on the picture of "Home, Sweet Home," you are doing well. If you don't give the neck to the rich relative and the white meat to the cook, you are playing in luck. If you don't upset the water-glass and spill the jelly, and knock over the bouquet, you are deft. If you don't swear, you are some Christian; and if you don't cry, you are some doughboy. If you don't come to with a string of sausages around your neck and dark meat in your whiskers, you are getting away with the job like some little carver.

The thing, dear reader, is to have complacency and a sharp knife. I am never going to lose a chance to philosophize and draw my moral as well as my week's pay. Study your technique, in this world, and keep a sharp butcher-knife. If I couldn't have but one, I would have the knife. But you can have both. The world has as many joints as an old Tom Turkey—locate them and whet your scimitar. Then go for the old bird! Sometimes he is wonderfully tender, ready to fall into your platter. It is all according to what kind of a bird you draw. But most of us get old Toms. They callous the hand and sicken the heart. We sweat while others around the board joke and banter. We take the neck; they get the choice bits. But always remember that you are carving; you are on the job; and that the day will come when you, too, will sit and wait while some other poor devil tackles his first Old Tom—the World, the Flesh and the Devil.

ON "ABRAHAM AND LOT"



MODERN instances are not altogether unique. Find me an ungrateful heir, a youngster who thinks that he knows more than his elders about everything on earth, and I will ask you to turn with me to Genesis and consider for a time the story of Abraham and Lot.

Abraham (originally Abram, the "ham" being thrown in for good behavior), was a remarkable business man, a loyal and good man, a wonderful visionist, a leader. He had a handsome wife, Sarah, but no children at the opening of this story. His wife was so good looking that she worried Abraham, for fear that Pharoah might take her away from him. Perhaps she was not so good-looking as Abraham thought; for after Pharoah had looked her over, he told Abraham to take her along and not worry any more about her. Possibly Pharoah did not like blondes.

Lot was Abraham's nephew and Abraham cherished him as a son, taking him when they all went up out of Egypt. Now, Lot was not, in my opinion, so much as he thought himself. In the first place he was the original High-Roller and what is worse, the allegorical equivalent of all human selfishness and egotism. He is introduced into Genesis, not alone for the historical perspective but also for the moral contrast between the uncommonly big Abraham, and the commonly little Lot.

As things progressed, Lot made a lot of trouble for Abraham. Abraham was a very rich man. He had cattle, gold, silver, power, command, the backing of Jehovah. He looked big to everyone except Lot. This

is frequently the case in modern lives, as between big fathers and little sons. Property was regarded as divinely sacred in those days, as it always will be except by revolutionists and Marx Socialists—I say divine because it is said in the word of God to Adam, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.” Nothing is said about taking away by violence the bread that other men have won by thrift and toil. Everything Lot had, was from Abraham, and yet Lot considered Abraham old-fashioned, effete, *non compos mentis*, a punk business man, and not *au courant* with “efficiency.” He and his men fought Abraham and his men until it was necessary that they separate.

You have seen just such Jaspers as this in these days,—no gratitude; nothing but egotism and self-interest. Abraham saw through him but was patient. He said that if they must separate, Lot might choose the land, east or west side of the Jordan, as he chose and he, Abraham, would take what was left. Generous of Abraham! I call it glorious! How about Lot? He took the best land—all of it, and left Abraham the barrens.

Did this wind up Abraham and make Lot richer? Not so. Abraham kept right on, growing richer, and Lot kept on getting no richer a great deal faster. And why was this? The answer is simple—Abraham was thrifty and a worker; and Lot was cultivating the habit of going out nights. Genesis says, “Lot pitched his tent over toward Sodom,” and according to Genesis, Sodom was a bad burg. And then, too, mixed up with his red-light habits, Lot got into a League of Nations scrape where there were a lot of scrappy kings who fell on each other and Lot woke up to find himself a

captive, with all of his wives and servants and cattle and sheep. Who came to his rescue? Nobody else except that old-fashioned fossil named Abraham, who went over with a crew of men, chased Lot's captors "unto Dan"; routed them; walloped the life out of them; got Lot out; restored all his property to him and would not take a cent for doing it. Some old has-been! Eh!

You might think that this would straighten out Lot; but not at all, not at all! It wasn't any time until Jehovah was after Lot and this meant business. Jehovah was sick of the red-light district of Sodom and he proposed to send a rain of fire and other incendiary bombs on the residential section of Sodom. And so the poor old has-wasser of an Abraham had to come over and get Lot out of trouble again. He did it by means of his own righteous life and his own leadership and his standing with God. And there is no finer picture in history than this forgiving nobleman of God, leading Lot and his fresh wife out of Sodom, the Man caring for the Dude, and the subsequently saline spouse.

And yet there is no assurance that Lot ever appreciated Abraham. If he did, the Bible does not indicate when. Abraham is an immortal. Lot died after he took to drink and in incestuous manner founded the tribes of Moab and Ammon, that afterwards gave Jehovah and Moses and Joshua so much trouble by their worship of strange gods.

Thus is epitomized a type of young man which is still extant—who think that they are wiser than their fathers and who believe that "things have changed"; whereas there is no change and never will be any

change in Duty, Loyalty, decent living and respect to elders, in gratitude and love. There never can be any day when it won't pay to be decent.

ON "THE OLD BRICK OVEN"



T NEVER was my job to build a fire in the old brick oven, though it had been the job for some of the older boys; but there the oven yawned in the side of the kitchen, its one eye gleaming, often, in the twilight, like that of Polyphemus out of the cave, or rather, to my childish fancy, like the eye of the giant who chased Jack of the Bean-Stalk down his ladder of tendrils to safety and a happy life forever after.

I think, although I cannot just say positively, that I have assisted in cutting the wood and building the fire in the old brick oven. The twigs that set off the crackling flame, I can just recall laying in, criss-cross, to start the blaze. It seemed to me like setting the house afire and that is what it was apt to do as we learned. The rear of the cavern of the old brick chimney extended into the kitchen cellar and stuck out like the back of a huge elephant, in the darkness, a repository for many things which are now forgotten and then were partially so. The old brick oven itself, was a huge place of domed bricks,—the first form of fireless cooker.

And so I can see the firelight gleaming through the dampers of the old brick oven, a dull red glow in the dimness of the old kitchen, and can hear the distant crackling of the cooling bricks as the heat passed off them into the spaces and into the viands that were

cooking therein. It was like looking into another world of flame; into the door of a furnace in a winter's night; into the pathway of light from a door flung open to receive the guest.

It was supposed—and there is no reason to doubt it—that things cooked in the old brick oven took on a different flavor. Beans and brown-bread from the old brick oven were cooked by slow process and by the sublimation of their juices into a substance of which the delectability was never in doubt. I recall seeing the pots of beans come out, all rosy colored, and the beans tumble out like rubies, strung on links of juices clearer than platinum. I have seen apples, baked in the old brick oven, that would stand up all limpid and translucent and so deep red as to look like balls of red yarn. I have seen brown bread come out all steaming brown and flavored with all the perfumes of the beans and apples and the fine grains of which they were made in those riotous days. It plainly was no fairy tale about the good things that came from the old brick oven.

It was a comfort to have a brick oven in the kitchen in the winter time, for it was a sort of hot air furnace for most of the premises, and then, too, we always ate in the kitchen and it was fun to get "set" at the table and see mother pull out the beans.

What a ceremony! The long hook that was used to get them to the door of the oven; the glow of the bricks; the steaming of the pot; the odor of the unveiling—well, life was not so complex, in those days; there were not so many fol-de-rols and less "service"; but I do not recall that anyone starved.

And it is certain to me that the old brick oven knit the home closer together. We get out of life what we

see, what we fancy. The fire light playing on the hearth; the eye of the old brick furnace winking in the twilight; the churn, dashing to and fro; the whirr of the old spinning wheel, as often as I have seen my grandmother sitting there in the afternoon spinning her yarn; the smell of lilacs; the meadow brook; the gentle sweep of the fields and pasture from the window by the old willow tree; the old open chamber with its faint, musty odor of dried apples and herbs hanging from the rafters; the old books and papers; the singing of the frogs in springtime—these are the things that will endure.

And in the last hours of most men and women it is these things that come back, making pictures; weaving fancies; recreating faces and forms long since gone. They re-people the old rooms; make them again vocal with song and laughter of childhood's beloved and bring back the Easter of our lives, before yet the Easter of our souls has been accomplished. Perhaps it is the sublimation of these that, gathering like winged-bearers about our failing bodies, attend us in the passing; and bear us sweetly and gently out of mere memories into new realizations.

ON "A LITTLE BUCK-UP STORY"



ABOUT thirty years ago, I ran across a little chap who came to this town to make a living. He was a Jew, named Jacob Goldman. He was one of that race of independent Jews who never work for any person except themselves. He was a tiny fellow, with big dreamy eyes, a power of wit, a sense of indefatigable courage.

I came across him in a newspaper way, by reason of a matter of police court, in which he was defending himself in a case of replevin of an old horse, of which he had become doubtful owner. He seemed to be in the right in the case; his interests appealed to me and induced me to write about him somewhat romantically, with a touch of such pathos as I could summon. He got out of his trouble and I used to meet him in Fred White's tailor shop where he was a welcome visitor, induced by Mr. White's well-known fondness for odd characters. You always found them there, if anywhere, in the old days.

Jakie was a lover of a horse. This was also a bond of interest; for, if anything interested us, it was the "hoss," as an element of taste. Jakie was an inveterate hoss-trader. And he was also very hard up. His effort, however, was never for himself but for grain enough to feed his horse. He always had a new one that ate more than the predecessor. He used to drive his latest acquisition up to the tailor shop and calling everyone out he would say, "Isn't he a beau-u-uty, Mister Vite! I tink maybe he eat less dan vat de odder vun eated."

Jakie pursued the business of peddler. And he got on. Work! I wonder if the native-born American knows what work is by the side of the alien-born! You never saw a foreign-born Jew, with a purpose to get ahead, who did any loafing to speak of unless to a purpose. They invariably dig away with heart and soul. They concentrate; and concentration is the secret of success.

Little by little, Jakie got a better and a better horse and as they came along with fatter sides they were less nearly omniverous and more economical, doing more work on less grain, which is the habit of well-fed animals—and people. He used to come up in this office and my news columns were full of the sayings of Jakie. I wrote sketches of him; idealized his struggles; saw in it the growth of alien peoples; found in him texts for courage and comfort.

Three or four years passed and Jakie had three horses, one of them threatened with speed. Then he took over a group of assistants and put them on the road. Then he bought a fine cart and went over the road like a gentleman. Then one day he got married. I went to the wedding—a fine affair with the prettiest black-eyed Rebekah for a wee, little wifie that I ever saw and a lot of friends from New York who had come over with him on the ship long before. He stayed around here a time after this—two or three years—and then one day he came in and said, “I am all sold owitt.” New York for him and big business. He had a fine suit of clothes; a decent, comfortable look in his face; a bright eye; a pretty wife; a black-eyed baby; a roll of cash in his pockets and a job in a wholesale

clothing shop in New York, where he was bound to make good.

I have never seen him since; but somehow he has always epitomized for me the rewards of consistent and persistent effort on the part of a man who seemingly never had a chance in the world. Up against a language that he could hardly speak; found in police court strapped and up against the law; devoting himself to nothing but his own affairs with a commendable directness that is sometimes spelled in terms of "minding one's own business"; patient; always laughing; never downcast; always hunting an old horse with a view to turning a dollar; always saving his money; given to no bad habits—here was the symbol of the new bourgeoisie of the old world that depends not on revolutions for its success but on thrift; diligence; patience and sticking to one job.

I wish I could say that later in life I met him and found him a great and prosperous merchant. I can do nothing of the kind. I never saw or heard of him after he left this town. But I have never forgotten him and his example has had its effect on me in those depressed hours when inclined to ask "What's the use?" I have thought of Jakie Goldman and said to myself, "Buck up! Jakie Goldman did." And that's the "use" of Jakie Goldmans in this world. It isn't always the money or success they make, it's the pep they put into others by their example!

ON "NOAH"



CERTAIN things that are happening today remind me of Noah, without whose foresight none of us would be here today. Noah's foresight, practiced today, in cities and in nations, would help solve many issues that otherwise may bring on the deluge.

Noah was a noble character. To be sure he fell for the grape, once—but only once. Search history and apart from his experimental spree you will find no man who did a more complete and satisfactory job than Noah. He built the ark on pure faith. On the day when Noah hitched up and went out to go for gopherwood to lay the keel of his ark, there was not a cloud in the oriental skies. Noah alone saw that there was going to be a spell of weather. Seeing it, he got ready. How many of you are emulating Noah? How many of you see what is coming, in these cities, in this nation, for instance, unless you get ready? And are you behaving like Noah?

Noah had his critics. They came down on the wharf while he was building the Ark; sat around, whittled and chewed shavings of gopher—rags not having been invented. They laughed at the architecture of the Ark. They asked him what good Arks had ever done. They asked him how much the Lord was paying him as a commission. They asked him if a chap over in the town across the river hadn't built an ark that wouldn't work. They said they didn't believe in Arks. They said that taxes were very high and they could not afford Arks themselves and did not think that Noah

was doing right in building an Ark at this inopportune time. The "inopportunists" were so numerous that they sent a delegation down to advise Noah to wait until next summer before starting an Ark, for it looked to them like a drouth. Some of them said that if Noah built the Ark, the darned thing would most likely bring on a flood. Noah kept on building and then the critics said that Noah was a nut—just plain, plumb dotty. They said "we shall build no Arks! We shall save our money and put it in the bank and brag about how much money we have out at interest. Noah is one of the impractical dreamers. He simply does not understand conditions in this town. It never has rained over three days; it never will. He is always thinking about saving the human race. He better save money." And then they said the worst thing they could possibly say about Noah. They said, "He is an idealist."

Noah launched the ark and a few months later he opened the door of the good old boat; lit his pipe; looked over the waste of waters and wondered what had become of his critics. And only the dove fluttered—nary a critic!

This time and money spent by Noah for preparedness made it possible for you and me to be here today. A certain amount of work done for other people as well as ourselves will sometimes pay equal dividends. There are some people to whom \$2 in taxes is bigger than \$20 for tobacco. They call "taxes" just plumb waste. A fire department runs up and puts out the fire on his roof and saves his home. Taxes support it but taxes are all waste just the same. In days of Rome, fire departments were run by private corporations and they would not save your house from burning unless

you paid them a fee—just the same as you hire a plumber.

We want a little injection of the blood of old Noah in our corporate system. We want to begin to see that what we do for others we do also for ourselves. It made me sick to see Auburn's city mass meeting turn down the one mill tax for a beginning of a park system, Monday evening. But what's the use—the old-fashioned chaps who see tax as a burden instead of an investment, were in the majority. They were there chewing the good old gopher wood and hollering about taxes. A man who spends five dollars for a box of cigars, spends it for himself. Nobody else has a taste of it. It is his alone. The man who spends five dollars for a park and for civic improvement spends his five dollars for twenty thousand people, so that measured by actual accomplishment, he gets \$100,000 for his money. If you can disprove that, I will give you the chance.

Noah lived after some other people passed. He planted the vine and raised a family of whom we are the sole survivors. If Noah had not invested in the future; had not believed in civic welfare, we should not have been here. We would probably have been fish swimming around—some as sharks; others as suckers. Noah happened to believe in preparedness and so he kept bone-dry in two ways. If Noah were here today, he would be planning for the time when discontent at unsocial conditions should mount into deluge. He would be doing his best to make conditions such that if it rained overlong, we might be friends and brothers well under cover. Believe me! Arks cost money; but they are good investments. Buy a slice in every likely-looking ark that is offered! The price of arks is going up!

ON "THE ELM TREE"



ITS best, it is when standing alone in a broad, green intervale, by the side of a meandering brook, its feathery fronds spouting up like a fountain and falling back in spray that fairly trickles down its columnar base. Set against a golden sunset, it has all the glory of pagan temples seen through stained glass windows.

Odin, the vast triumphant god of Norse mythology, was walking by the sea one day with his brothers, Vile and Ve. A great storm had cast two tree trunks upon the beach, one an ash, the other an elm, and out of these they fashioned a man and a woman. Odin infused them with life and spirit; Vile gave them reason and the power of motion; Ve gave them vision, hearing and speech. The man was made of the ash; the woman of the elm. She was called Embla and, from these two, the whole human race descended. Maude Going says that this pagan mythology is credible in art; because there is something peculiarly feminine about the aspect of the elm, even to the feathery growths on the trunk below the mass of boughs, which Oliver Wendell Holmes compares to the soft, light locks about a woman's ear and brow.

The elm is hardly an effeminate tree, nevertheless, and if womanly in its grace and if lovelier than any other tree in its straight trunk, its spouting, fountain-like foliage, its resiliency to the movement of the winds, its nicety of habit, its cleanliness and its glory of color, it is yet a mighty tree, strong, enduring, resolute and capable of solitudes. I love it for that—its capacity to dwell apart in spaces that it seemingly has sought

for its prospect; its willingness to serve. There are six elms in one cluster in a dooryard of a Maine farm, all uniting into one profile against the sky. I go there very often to admire it. An elm (or better, three elms) in the dooryard of a New England home on a hill, is worth while. It bears up well against gales; not so sturdy as the evergreen it stands the storm better than most of the broad-leaved trees and quickly denuded in the autumn, stands through the winter with only thin antennae to rock to the passing winds.

John Burroughs considers that our trees are not so sturdy looking as the trees of England; "more nervous and agitated in expression, and he feels that the reason for the more massive repose of the English elm, oak and beech is that they have been longer out of the woods and have had plenty of time in which to develop individual traits and peculiarities and then, too, they have grown less in a hurry and have come to have the picturesqueness of age without its infirmity." But that is mere fancy, it seems to me! Trees stand out firmer against low hedges of flowers; leaning over rose-embowered half-timbered cottages; in parks where the vivid green of a lawn-like sward enhances the upspringing trunks. I still retain memories of velvet intervals with mighty elms, springing up and up and away and then falling in masses of swaying foliage almost back to earth! If you will find a lovelier message of God's own love of Beauty, for its own sake and for a message to us, groveling all too often here below, I ask you for it. It is the song that the singer gives from her heart, it is the dream that the artist paints or chisels; it is the hope that the saint expires with his prayer.

The elm is a very faithful keeper of the tryst with Spring. "Rippling through the branches goes the sunshine," says Lowell. "Among thy leaves that palpitate forever is the soul of the nymph of spring that is prisoned there. The soul of a tremulous inland river 'quivering to tell her woe, but ah! dumb, dumb forever!' " It is very dear to us New Englanders, this keeping of the tryst with spring, and I hope you will watch its keeping, soon. There are at least two things you may see—first the little indistinctiveness that comes on the distant hillsides, sometimes very early in April, "as if a veil of gauze had been dropped before them." It is not the first film of summer green. It has color and yet has no color that one can name. It is the effect of the first swelling of the innumerable buds of all colors, purple, crimson, tawny, rarely green—the flower buds that breed little blossoms that float away while the foliage is still folded away in its casings. Of these the elm are lovely—larger than many others, swelling in the March sunshine, covered with pellucid scales that look, says one writer, "like tortoise shell."

What a mother is nature! All winter these scales have kept the elm bud safe from frost and storm, saving the sleeping life within the blossoms, and, their duty done, they fly away and spring is here and the great, radiant tree stands forth again and in solitude by the stream or along the city streets, stands guard of Beauty and symbol of aspiration and of purpose. In its branches are wonders enough of construction to fill a book in its telling; its blossoms more nearly perfect, often, than the tulip; its nobility unstudied; its life, as of the ages, its shadow, the tryst of beast and bird. All guarded to the finest, tiniest leaf-bud by Nature.

And with the elm of the meadow enduring, are ye, O man, to be of little Faith!

ON "HOW I TIRED OF FARMING"



NE time a good many years ago we had an agricultural editor named Lyman Abbott. He was a good man, a kind man, a bee-culturist, an expert on apples, a poet, and he kept a very stuffy office on the sunny side of the old Journal Building looking out on the alley and on Lisbon Street.

Mr. Abbott's office was full of odds and ends of agricultural wonders. Farmers came in with the longest sheaves of grain, which Mr. Abbott stood up in the corners or hung on hooks along the walls. They brought him enormous traces of corn which he suspended by the husks and left to collect the dust of ages. They brought him hives of bees to buzz away the droning summer afternoons. They brought him patent contraptions of wire and patent apple-pickers, never to see the light of day again. He had the true spirit of the man of the "littered desk" and he left things as they were, usually, the windows shut, the room close and smelling suggestively of the tenantry of the farm, heifer-like and rich with samples of fertilizer, smelling in the corners.

I had been but a short time on my job and was prone to exploration. Mr. Abbott's room looked interesting—so long and narrow, running up to a sharp corner toward Lisbon street, and there filled with papers and spring-tooth harrows and similar affairs which were too mysterious not to attract attention.

I think it was the second or third week of my advent into the *Lewiston Journal* family which was not then large. We used to get out a newspaper with two editors, one reporter, who was also city editor, sporting editor, society editor, city hall reporter, police reporter, snake editor and religious editor combined in the person of yours truly. We had also two persons in the business office, no advertising solicitors, no newsboys selling papers on the streets, no circulation managers, no stenographers, no telephones, no electric lights, no electricity on the premises, no power but water and leg-power.

We also had Mr. Abbott who loved bees and spring-tooth harrows and patent appliances for making farming easy. And into his office I wandered one day in April, thirty-six years ago this month, to see what I could see. Often have I told this tale, as a warning against curiosity in children. It represents every element of the old, old story of Bluebeard's wives. I have written of the same thought in regard to "watching one's step" when poking into other people's affairs. The same sort of thing befell me when I fell into the soap barrel, of which I have informed you.

On this day I passed the barricade of Uncle Abbott's desk over into *terra incognita* of his farming implements, to inspect a low, droning noise that was making good over by the sunny April window. As I stepped over, something unwound and sprang up my trousers legs and upset me together with a series of farming implements leaning up against the wall. There may have been also in the downfall an apple-picker or two, a green-bone grinder, an incubator, surely a roll of new-fangled wire fencing which had been sent by an

advertiser. Many years have passed and I have no catalogue of the articles that came down. There were, I am positive, a trace or two of peculiarly dusty corn that enwreathed my brow; much wire fencing that embraced my form; the spring-tooth harrow that ran up and down my pants-leg, the fine, upstanding wreath of oats eleven feet tall—"tallest the editor had seen that season"—that stood over the place where the hero lay buried like a weeping willow over the tombstone of the dearly beloved; and then down like an avalanche came all of Uncle Abbott's dried specimens of insidious beetles, potato bugs, dried and desiccated; and phylloxera of ancient days! All these sprinkled me with the balm of centuries.

And then—I heard more low droning as I struggled with the wire and the spring-teeth and then! O then! the bees came forth! Now a bee is all right in his place: which is either in a hive or in a book. But when a person is tied hand and foot in the dust of ages; when bumble bees, drones and queen bees and lively young honey-makers are rioting with your system, extracting huge junks and eating them and throwing away what they can't eat, it is no proper introduction for a young man to the life of a farmer. If a person ever had any disposition for life on the farm, to be buried under the files of the agricultural editor and all the rest of his museum, while a hive of bees is perforating your union suit and making merry with your life blood, is surely discouraging, as I can testify.

When the editor, and all of the ladies, especially the ladies, rescued me, I was no longer even remotely interested in agriculture and never have been since, while

I will run farther and faster away from a spring-tooth harrow than I will from a boa-constrictor—when I see him.

ON "THE SMELL OF A BRUSH FIRE"



EARLY everyone likes the smell of a bonfire. You can recall when you leaped forth, five feet at a leap, with whoops at each landing, after supper of some April evening, to follow the smell of a distant brush fire. The odor seemed to put pep in your legs. You gamboled like a young kid on the hills of the psalmist.

Often when you found it, there was nothing but a pillar of smoke from a back-yard rubbish heap, but none the less would you stay and watch its slow spirals to the evening sky. It fitted your mood. It soothed the perturbed, longing spirit of the boy, in you. If the man would let you rake a bit and pile on more stuff to make the smudge and you could afterward stand in the smoke, you were happy. And later, you crawled in between the sweet sheets of home smelling like a dump heap, but satisfied.

But if you could find a real bonfire, what exhilaration! To see it from afar lighting up the evening sky and the surrounding barns and houses; to come nearer and see the sparks flying up and roll over crackling in the night; to catch the shadows of the dancing children as you speeded up the streets and through the back-lots; to see the curls of the girls floating out behind them as they ran about; to smell the ineffable odors of the spruce, pine, fir and hemlock, mingled in

ecstasy of perfume on the altars of the vernal gods—this was the apotheosis of joy.

And it was not without its larger recompense; potatoes baked in the ashes raked out with a crotched stick and eaten raw and hot, with hard hearts and mealy outsides—just like some people whom we have come to know later; potatoes with burnt skins and unsavory appearance, mealy all through, like some other people whom we have also known. The leaping through the flames with daring that made the small girls appear transfixed with admiration and terror, the bringing of fresh boughs to hear the roar of the flames as they bite into the pitch of the fir and hemlock, and finally the dying down of the fire into red coals with groups of boys standing around silently and thoughtfully in the sweet April night.

You know of Meleager. He was a sort of mythological chap whose life was to be measured by a brand laid upon the fire. I think of him often as I watch the fire on the hearth, for Meleager was born to trouble with the Fates who told his mother, Althaea, when the infant was seven days old that he should live until the brand on the fire was consumed. The mother plucked the brand from the burning and hid it in her bosom. All this is told in the Ode of Bacchylides, how in the wasting warfare of the times, Meleager killed his brothers when Althaea in anger laid the brand from her bosom on the fire once again and watched it calmly as poor Meleager went up in smoke with the burning brand. We boys did not know about that; but something about the moods of those after hours around the red coals of the brush fires, must have touched us with the passing of life. At any rate it was something more

than the mere worship of fire, which is innate in most of us. How many Meleagers went up in the bonfires! What a complex chemical reaction had been set up, we did not know; but we did know that here was mystery. Something struck the deeper being of the boy! He felt his wings beating against the bars of life. It had its voice for him; for fire is not mute. It has a distinct speech; it roars in the bonfire, a sort of eager chant just suited to a boy, who likes to shout to the four winds of heaven. The fire on the hearth is sedate, like age, respectful and considerate, driving its wedges into the wood and peeling off the bark like the blue flame of the blowpipe. The fire in the grass goes like a snake stealthily hissing along. The fire in the furnace seeps through in silence or else with no more noise than the lapping of waves of milk on a shore of cotton-wool. But the bonfire shouts like a boy and leaps like a boy and rollicks like a boy and is soon worn out like a boy. It must have taken its name from boy-fire, which is not far from bonfire.

Bonfires are good for boys. I would have the legislature provide a fund for bonfires. It will improve their morale; develop their thought; warm their spiritual as well as physical natures. Flame purifies, even the soul, which is accounted as nothing but Prome-thean heat.

All this from smelling a distant odor of a brush fire the other night built of leaves, a piece of burlap and a few sprigs of hemlock. When there is to be a real bonfire will some good friend notify me?

ON "GHOSTS AND SUCH"



I AM well acquainted with ghosts—I almost said spirits. When I was a boy, we had ghosts hanging around daily, hourly, every evening, in summer. I never saw one, but they were there and we enjoyed them. I had as soon see a ghost as hear the Lowell-Lodge debate in Boston which was the most tiresome thing I ever heard. Our ghosts were happy, fun-making shades, table-tipping, spirit-rapping, cutting up high jinks everywhere.

My grandfather had a boy on his farm whom he took in as an orphan from the unkindly hands of the selectmen of the town and whom he brought up as his own boy. The lad had never been out of the country village. He was powerfully strong in body and peculiar in mind. He had an effeminate voice and strange receptivities.

One day, with no incentive that we could discover, he took to having "spirit manifestations;" table tip-pings, spirit rappings, spirit writings—all the wonders of the "medium." It was a lonely country home, so we had nothing else to do, in the soft summer twilights, when ghosts could walk without getting a cold, but seek to penetrate the veil that separates this world from the next. You would not believe me if I should tell you all of the strange things that befell us young people. The boy was about sixteen; I was about fourteen; there was a girl cousin about seventeen; my grandfather of about seventy and grandmother approximately of the same age—both the latter supremely indifferent to the whole affair and often not approving. Then, too, there

was an uncle and an aunt and sometimes another uncle; but the chief of it all was this boy, whom we called Albert. There you are! A country boy, who had never been where he could have learned guile or trickery; who seemed to be wholly unconscious of what was going on; who did things that seemed to suggest the occult, mystic, unreal, in this workaday world.

It is said to have happened one evening by accident. This boy said, "I believe I can call up spirits." So they sat around a table in mediumistic fashion and summoned them. "If there are any spirits present they will please rap," was the formula. And they rapped. Nobody knew which one was responsible for their response, for all hands were on the table, but it was not long before it became evident that the receptive person was Albert. He became very famous throughout the countryside after some years and he did all sorts of strange things "assisted by the spirits," that no one else could do. I fancy that after a time, he mixed up trickery with his gifts; but he knew no trickery in the old days of which I am speaking. I have sat, far into the night, two or three around a table, and talked by spirit-rapping with what we esteemed to be the departed; and yet, it never gave me any qualms or unsettled any religious faith I ever had or was looked on as anything but a sort of game. We had special spirits that came—Captain Kidd, who would lead us on in our search for his gold until we got right down to brass tacks and then he would tell us to hie hence to a profane region. In fact, there never seemed to be any real information in any of it. Yet we had many inexplicable things—which I have not time or space to relate. But here is something that I can testify to—both together, in the

old open chamber of a hot summer night,—I held Albert's hands and he summoned the spirits, unwillingly, for the effort always made him wakeful. They came and rapped on the head-board, on the water jug and the walls,—rude, heavy, stout rapping, as loud almost as hammer strokes, thumping, and finally one good stout crack on my forehead. "Drat it!" said Albert, as he got another on his own head, "The fools!"

Yes! as I said before, I have met ghosts. They are not so bad. We tried one evening to get the spirits to blow a wail on an old yellow clarinet that sat upright on the little hanging wall-bookcase. Now—I don't take oath to this; but I will swear that I *believe* that we heard the faint, low-drawn wail of a ghostly breath through the old, old clarinet, once played by lips long since dead. I say I won't swear that we heard it; I will swear that we all said we did. Something happened. We were terribly wrought upon; we stopped the fun for the evening. I can recall it after forty years. I HEARD something. I was too nervous to tell what.

Albert lifted tables with one finger; he could put his little finger on a table and three men could not lift it; it would tear apart before one could wrench it from the floor. How did he do it? I don't know; don't care much. I only know that he was a crude country lad who did not know what he was doing. Do you?

ON "CHURCH DINNERS"



HE church dinner is not so common a theme as it once was, because butter is not so plentiful and eggs are high and because people are keeping closer run of the household expense accounts than they used to do. I have always held that, in the old days when the housewife carried to the church, dinner for the family and then everyone paid for the eating thereof, it was uneconomic; because it would have been less trouble to have carried the money to church than to have carried the food.

The best church dinner that I ever went to was just out of Bowdoinham village along in 1879—there, or thereabout. It was a lovely winter night and we went over on runners, boys and girls all tucked in pung half full of warm, loose straw that tickled your feet. One of the features (I will not say eatures) of the church supper, was an enormous chicken pie. It was the biggest chicken pie that I ever saw, baked in a great iron pot, almost three feet across and placed in the center of the table under a hanging lamp with streamers of tissue paper festooning from the lamp to the handles of the pot and to its bale. It was lovely.

There was an unusually pretty girl there at the dinner named Curtis. I hardly know why I should remember her name—for I fancy that she would not remember mine—if so and she is yet in the flesh and sees this, I shall be pleased to hear from her in reference to the matter. The parson of the church—it was Methodist—was an excellent occasional preacher in the district who had come over for the festivities. We were

to pay twenty-five cents each for the dinner and draw a girl by means of colored ribbons. I drew the fair maid. And that's the end of that.

The minister came in very rosy from the outdoor with his boots covered with snow. He had been romping outside with some of the sisters and elders of the church—in a democratic and fearless illustration of innocent fun. He approached the pie to carve it; slipped and plunged his hand full into the pie up to his elbow. It was hot and as he flung up his hand he caught the festoons and nobody ever could understand just what did happen. He seemed to slip again on his off foot and lunge again and then sort of sink into the middle of the table and go down in a general collapse of pie and parson.

I wrote this story in the Lewiston Journal of Dec. 13th, 1902, sixteen years ago when it was sixteen years fresher in my memory, but when I was more inclined to exaggeration than now. I quote from that account that the parson "plunged his whiskers into the pie; the table busted from end to end and the minister's whiskers flowed out over the edges of the pie like smoke through the crack of a door." I also said that "I noticed the soles of the parson's boots as they disappeared and that the pickles danced with glee about his pie-besmeared face. * * * The picture of the valiant preacher with a wishbone hanging on each ear and a section of pie crust stuck to his bald spot like a mortar-board on the head of a college senior was worth remembering for all one's life." The parson's whiskers were fine long Burnsides—common in those days—and they retained gravy with perfect success. The poor man! They dug him from the debris with care and

love and bore him tenderly to a near-by settee. He was the finest chicken salad I ever saw. Years have passed and I never see a chicken pie without happy memories. It has not improved my appetite for chicken pie for I never really cared for them—but it has enlarged my capacity to enjoy church suppers. I am always hoping that some other minister or elder will fall into one just by way of entertainment. I used to say that if we could advertise that the minister would wrastle with a chicken pie at eight o'clock, promptly, the vestry of no church in the country would hold the attendance.

The church dinner has not wholly passed; but it is passing as a form of raising church debts. It has turned out that community eating is not an economical form of Hooverizing. Any man will eat five times as much food if it is placed before him and he has to spear it across the table quickly, deftly, eagerly before his neighbor can launch his uplifted fork, than he will at home where the only indoor sport he has is growling about the quality of the cooking. Church suppers are like Chamber of Commerce Banquets, the place where the private citizen becomes a public burden. I am ordinarily, I hope, a sacrificial party, and willing to give the white meat to the children and take the piece-that-went-over-the-fence-last for myself, and yet I will gloat over the celery hearts, grab all that I can get and eat for fear that someone else will get it.

Here permit me to stop and leave the philosophy to you. Is it not like nations sitting around the peace table? Are we not in danger of overreaching and falling into the pie?

ON "THE CROWS IN THE SKY"



HEARD the crows going over this morning, before my head was off the pillow. It sounded high up in the sky, like a clock striking the hour to mark the passing of winter and the coming of another year. We do not know when winter goes and spring comes in; but the voice of the crow heard thus distantly flying over early in the morning of early March is as good a starting point as any. When you hear his resolutely belligerent, yet ever cheerful voice, you know that the willow is putting out its furry little epaulets; that the honey bee is stirring himself and that down at the million, trillion grass roots, things are waking.

Sure enough, as I came to work this day also, I noticed that Neighbor Prescott's crocuses were putting up little pink ivory, lance-like heads along the wall of his house and that other neighbors were moving out ashes and slicking up lawns; for we who live in town have not so many signs of spring to seek as those who go afield more often. I have no special skill in adventuring in the fields and woods. I never was taught to study birds and flowers and to me one herb is like another. For this reason, tho my eyes dim at the vision of a landscape and my heart rejoices until I really feel like going on my knees in worship in the deep woods, I have no authority to write like the naturalist or the scholar of the woods.

I wonder if the naturalist has any advantage over one of those who, burdened by no scientific formulæ and carrying no nomenclature, write things out of their

hearts as to how nature touches them. John Burroughs, for instance, has no patience with those who go in the fields and string pretty phrases about them and add nothing to the sum total of human knowledge about life therein. Mr. Burroughs never says unkind things; for such is not his nature; but with all his poetry he is one of those who favor plain facts, simplicity of statement and no ad-captandum stuff. And any man who writes as though he had an audience is not on his good books. But Mr. Burroughs is a great word alchemist, nevertheless. If he has no conception of his audience how does he so delight us? And so—to each writer his own thought! If a man's intimate knowledge of the woodchuck and the honey bee be vague, may he not find in the general coucource of nature something that is worth talking about—even if it be only a bare pasture or a day on a hilltop or a walk down a country road, just by way of exhortation to others?

Last summer at Squirrel Island, I talked with John Burroughs about this matter. And he said it was according to what one did with his material. It is in his preface to *Wake Robin*—one of his very first books—that he puts down his notion, as he said it to me. You may find it in his beautiful simile about the honey bee and the author. He said that the honey bee does not gather honey from the flower. There is no honey in the flower. The bee gets sweetened water and flavor. The bee transmutes it into honey, by the art that is his. To it he adds the touch of formic acid that gives it piquancy, and we taste that and the thyme and the violet and the honeysuckle and the clover. The writer does the same. He goes abroad and comes home laden.

His art transmutes it into literature—at least the art of John Burroughs does.

It becomes a question, therefore, if any person not learned as Gilbert White, or John Burroughs, or Henry Thoreau, has any right to talk about mysteries that he does not understand. But the question does not preclude one from enjoying them and pondering over Nature and wondering what is man and what is his destiny. It does not deter one from going reverently under the great trees, in what Thoreau called "Mr. Spalding's woods" and asking himself if there is any closer proximity to God in the going. I do not believe that Mr. Burroughs got his religion out of the Latin name of the hedgehog or the nomenclature of the Wake-Robin. He never got this noble creed out of dissecting the Calamus. "I have no doubt," says John Burroughs, "that the life of man on this planet will end. But the potential man will continue on other spheres. * * *

The universe is all of a piece so far as its material constituents are concerned; that we all know. Are not the planets all of one family, sitting around a central source of warmth and life? Worlds are only red corpuscles in the arteries of the infinite. If man has not yet appeared on other planets, he will in time appear there. I do not say that he is the end and aim of creation; it would be logical to expect a still higher form. Man has been here but little more than one hour of the vast geologic day. Less than another geologic day like that which has passed and no doubt all life from the earth will be gone. What then? The game will be played over again in other worlds, without approaching any nearer the end than now. There is no final end as

there was no beginning and can be none with the infinite." This is not at all what I started out to say when interrupted this morning by the crows in the high skies, but it has a meaning to me if to no one else.

ON "DRIVING HOME THE COW"



I KNOW a man who, at the age of forty-five years, emancipated by a prosperous business from the necessity of performing such service, yet goes every night in summer to a pasture, over a mile away, to drive home the cow. He says that as the hour comes and the shadows lengthen, something calls to him out of his boyhood and sends him to this pastoral pursuit.

I have known other odd forms of pleasure, but none more sensible. To drive the cow, one must walk; and to walk, one must belong to the Order of Walkers, of which John Burroughs says: "All the shining angels second and accompany the man who goes afoot, while all the dark spirits are ever looking out for a chance to ride. * * * A race that neglects or despises the primitive gift of walking; that fears to touch the soil; that has no footpaths, no community of ownership in the land, which they imply; that warns off the walker as a trespasser; that knows no way but the highway, the carriage way; that forgets the stile, the foot-bridge, that even ignores the right of the pedestrian in the public road, providing no escape for him but in the ditch or up the bank, is in a fair way to more serious degeneracy."

So—my friend must perforce walk, through all weathers, for his cow; for a cow would be insulted, if

personally conducted by what Mr. Burroughs calls "a dark spirit," in an automobile evilly smelling up the fragrant highways, or by a person carrying an umbrella. I have heard of an untutored man going after his cow on a rainy day, with rope and umberell. Each was a blunder in bovine ethics. The cow stood for the rope over her horns, because of contrition; but because of conventions, would not stand for the umbrella; and when the man regained consciousness, the cow was half a mile nearer home and the man was sitting in the ditch, cautiously retracting his ears from between the ribs of the umbrella.

You *must* go for the cow, *au naturel*. The cow asks for simplicity. All she seems to require anyway is your society. She perfectly well knows the way home and the duty that calls her. All she asks is the deference implied by your waiting upon her each close of the day with a special invitation to make your house her home; and if she had her way, she would prefer that the invitation be extended to her by a barefoot, shock-haired, red-headed boy, wearing shirt and trousers only, held up by a pair of wide braces, crossed in the back.

I fancy that most of us who have driven cows, recall the etiquette at the bars and are sure that cows are "driven" best, when they are not driven at all. Of course there are cows—and cows. Some were always waiting at the bars; others had to be garnered from distant browsings and urged to the exit, with expletives and sour apples, used as missiles. Cows have dispositions—I recognize that. I once knew a man who had a nervous cow and who himself was fractious. In

this cow's tie-up could be found broken pitch-fork handles, clubs and other indications of chastisement as well as rude welts on the cow's hard old rump. "I don't suppose," said the man, "that anyone else but me could get along with that cow." But, as a rule, it is with cows as with people, they drive best when not driven. We boys should have learned—possibly we did learn—patience and tolerance, by driving cows. The low voice, the gentle hand, not to vex the cow; and then the spirit of tolerance for the limitations of the cow—as with folks. And this was enough philosophy, if learned, to pay rich dividends on the labor.

It was a shame that they did not know in those old-time schools, where there were boys who drove cows, what a fine occupation it was; through what a world of wonders it led; under what skies; over what a carpet; with what companions of Nature, so that the schoolmaster could have told us about it. And yet we old-fashioned boys did sense its beauty and incorporate into our fibre some of the undying life of the Open. There was always Adventure; often much boyish speculation at what the world might be; frequently very deep cogitation over what my father used to call "the so-ness of the as-it-were."

Modern boys lose this. They know nothing of the exhilaration that Walt Whitman indicated when he said, "Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road." They have no tinkling memories of distant cow-bells, each speaking its own old-home note to each boy, as surely as he knew the low of his own cow. They cannot see the leafy lanes; hear the high-hole, the pee-wee, the bluebird; wade again, in memory, the loitering brook, to lave the stone-bruised foot, the prehensile

foot of boyhood, bare, brown, tough against the road; riot through the orchards for "sopsy-vines" or "August sweetings;" chase the woodchuck with old "Bose," the good old cur-dog who always went along gamboling and sniffing over miles about; kill snakes; hunt sassafras root, and finally, get the cow, standing there quite evidently recognizing you and (as it seemed) happy that she was to be driven by her own boy who understood the fun of driving cows.

Yes, cows are like folks. They like to be led, if at all, by happy companions, not by dudes with umbrellas or demagogs with pitchforks. They like, also, the path to be sunny, tuneful, fragrant; the weather, as it happens; the way—Homeward.

ON "LAST DAYS OF SCHOOL"



HERE was a peculiar exhilaration about old-time "last days of school," with their ceremony and oratory. I can't recall just what exhilarated me personally, but somehow it seems, in a remote way, to be associated with my feet. I reckon, therefore, that it was due to the fact that we wore our shoes on such occasions and that these pressed on our erstwhile unrestrained toes of June and drove the blood to our heads and thereby exhilarated us.

No boy ever wore shoes, in my time, from May to "last day," and on the other hand, no boy went barefoot when he "spoke" on exhibition day if he had any shoes. I don't know why, but I suppose that it was not artistic for a boy to get up and yell "Ye c-c-call

m-m-m-e chief! And ye d-d-d-o well to c-c-call him ch-ch-ch-ief who f-f-or tw-tw-twelve long y-y-years," etc. Somehow, Spartacus was supposed to have shoes—I don't know why—but we thought that he might have had 'em because he was a "chief"; and probably we were correct about it. Certainly Spartacus never did appear in the forum with a rag round his big toe. Of course, we did not always have the shoes—just kip boots in winter and au naturel summers; so that many of us had to Sparta-cuss in our bare feet. And now that I think of it, I am not aware that it excited any special comment or disapproval. Society did not seem to be shocked. It was a simpler era of life, anyway, and one person was about as good as another so far as dress went. Occasionally we dressed up a little by washing our feet, or putting on a necktie under the paper collar, and that ended it.

About everyone in town went to the last day of school, except a few fathers, who were tied down to the trades. Farmers and their wives could generally get away, especially as it came between hay and grass. The schoolhouse would be hot, stuffy and bringing in the mingled suggestions of domestic life and rural pursuits. The Committeemen were also there and the "Supervisor" and the First See-lect-man. It was a gathering of the fashion of the community—and relatively just as impressive as any other fashion, anywhere. Fashion is only a matter of contest.

In this respect, there came a day once, a "last day of school" when there seemed to be a feeling of "jazz" in the air and the word went forth that we were to dress up. It came at an inopportune time for me, as

my wardrobe had not as yet come from the tailor's—neither my usual brown linen summer suit nor shoes of any description, as yet. But—the girls were going to dress and the boys were going to do their darnedest. It left me rather marooned, as I was to be an orator of the occasion; and I don't mind saying that I was "boy-Roscius"—able to holler "My name is Norval on the Grampian Hills" as loud as any other. No exhibition was complete without me.

It is a singular commentary on changed conditions of life, that it was a matter of seeming indifference to the parents of those days as to how their children looked. They were kind and loving, tender and sweet parents, but it did not especially concern them what we wore to "Last Day." If you "spoke up real loud," you were all right. There was no competition in shoes, so far as I can recall. We all, as a rule, shifted for ourselves. I went up attic and found a little blue coat with frogs for buttonholes and slashes up the sides, faced with rather worn silk—brilliant and once beautiful, to my eyes. I have no memory or knowledge of how it came into our family; we had no royalty among our relations.

I tried it on and while it did not go well with my little baggy trousers with a triple layer of patches on the seat and a call for a fourth, showing the imminent shirt-tail, I wore it. When I burst on the audience with that and "Arnold Winkelried! Make way for Libutty, he cried. Made way for libutty and died." Why, man! you could hear the gasp of surprise, the flutter of tense appreciation; the plaudits of childish wonder; the rustle of the farmer's foot. My eyes dim a bit as I wonder what sort of a child I must have

appeared, in that funny little coat and those weary pants, speaking for liberty. But perhaps I was in fitter costume than some children of today, bound to fashion and to set form. Perhaps those little bare toes did speak a part of the appeal, after all. Perhaps the imminence of the shirt spoke for the freedom of the sees. Perhaps the common level of wonder left larger room for the freedom of the soul.

ON "OLD MAIDS"



HAVE not seen an "old maid" for years. I don't think there are any nowadays. They used to be institutions, in old New England; the village "old maid," making buttonholes and doing plain sewing. God bless her for her usefulness.

So today I never hear the word "old maid." No one now believes that any woman who wanted to get married couldn't find some man to marry. When it is a reproach for green apples to ripen, for buds to blossom and May to become September, then it is a reproach for a girl to grow old. But because she didn't happen to want to marry without love, or to pick out some duffer to do cooking, washing and ironing for, at nothing per week and nothing found, it's no occasion for epithets. I reckon there are more old "fools" among married women than old maids among unmarried women and as many wives who would be old maids if they could, as there are old maids who would be wives if they had the chance.

No, indeed! The day has gone when any mere married woman can join in the jest and sneer at the "old maid." It isn't done any more. And don't mistake me! I am not discussing marriage but simply discussing the "disgrace" of not being married, which used to hang like a blight over old New England and force many a fair maid to marry the first chap whom she could "catch," be he a boor, a clown, a beast, a miser, a tyrant or a clod.

It is no longer a disgrace not to be married because woman has found out that she can very nicely get along unless she happens to fall in love. Then it's all over! If she falls in love good-bye to the Aunt Mary! Good-bye to the Aunt Tabby of forty years hence. She will marry and if all goes well she will be happier than ever she could be as an unmarried woman. But if not, if she does not choose to enter into a contract to sew on buttons for a man for whom she does not care a rap, then she emerges from the music-haunted woods of youth into the companionless sweep of middle life as what?

I will tell you. She is either a capable worker or a universal mother and general regulator in her married sisters' household—one of the two, nine times out of ten. If little Johnny is sick "Aunt Mary" tends him. If sister's baby dies, Aunt Mary folds the little wax-like hands and drops the last tear over the quiet baby face. If the girls in the household are married, Aunt Mary gives the final pat to the bride's fixings and is the mother's rival in the bride's fond love. She merges her identity in the love and the life of others and finding her religion in doing her duty in the daily round, is something of a saint, and a universal mother, as I have said.

I can also see so many of these high-headed, capable, independent, reliable unmarried business women around me that I wonder sometimes how much the world has been set back, by the marriage ordinance. I see one who is earning an independent livelihood and earning enough if she cared to do it to permit her to marry some failure of a man who should sew on HER buttons and do HER cooking. And I doubt not there are some men who would like the job. I knew an "old maid" who earned the modest salary of \$15,000 a year and who dressed like a princess and lived like an ascetic. I never, somehow, thought of her as being an "old maid." I read, too, now and then, of married women with the happiest of domestic relations also earning their independent incomes by their writing or their art. And I am determined in my reason, that it is a matter of "love," not a matter of "getting married" to some one no matter if he isn't worth much.

So—"old maid" is no longer opprobrious as a term. It merely signifies today a choice on the part of the woman and not the man. And usually it sanctifies women of this sort. The "Aunt Mary" who lives with her married sister and loves her nephews and nieces and is loved by them, is generally just about fit for heaven from the moment of her ultimate decision. God is no respecter of persons. "They who know MY will and do it," will shine over yonder just the same. By their deeds, their service, shall they be known. And so I take off my hat to these business women, married and unmarried, wives, widows and "old maids" who no longer are driven by the old-fashioned fetich, that a woman not married is a woman shamed, but who do as love impels them and thereby fulfil the ordinances of the "greatest thing in the world."

ON "CAMP-FIRES"



WE COME at dusk to the camping place and it lies, as happens in this instance, on the bank of a mountain stream, full in the sun of a hot August day. The grasses are white with heat and dead past recall. The plateau is level and inviting. The westering sun casts its shadows on the place through clumps of mountain ash whose red berries will come a little later, no doubt—a fact which I mention for your own delectation. The laboring teams with their loads of baggage and food come to a halt after many hours of toiling over mountain-sides, through brooks that bawl along without ceasing, and over streams which the horses forded belly-deep. We turn the horses loose amid the grass. We pitch the tent. We find the old fireplace left, years ago, by the river-drivers. We throw ourselves on the warm earth and burn incense to the dying day. We are in camp.

I do not know but what there are joys greater than coming into camp after a toilsome day; but I have experienced none. The fire is lit; the bedding is rolled out into the sunlight; the tent is raised and the brook is sought for the water for man and beast. "Who hath smelled the smoke of the wood fire at twilight?" or words to that effect. Who hath watched the water boil in the pail and the tea steep in the pot? Who hath seen the horses roll in the grass and the teamsters wiping the sweat of the day from the horses' sides? Who hath built the bed of boughs and laid them in shingle fashion without longing to kiss the earth that gives

us repose? Who hath fed by the camp-fire in the first glimmer of the dusk with the music of the river singing songs of out-doors sweeter than the antiphonies of the choir in cathedral?

It is blessed to be out of doors—wholesome and re-invigorating for any man; and the hardship is recompensed always by the reliefs. We sit about the camp-fire as the chill of the evening falls and, drinking the tea and eating the rough food of the woods, find in it nectar sweeter than we had dreamed could exist this side of Olympus. It is wonderful! The air clean and sweet; the day full of dying glory; the evening stars; the forms, gathered about the camp-fire silhouetted against the flaming west!

The world does not go out of doors enough. And it does not mean distance. It is anywhere that rivers run, grasses grow, birds sing and the stars come out. You can find comfort and distress alike under the stars and under a roof. It was no hardship to roll up in a blanket and lie on the bare earth with only a few boughs of the fir-tree under the head. The rolling over in the night is not all that it is cracked up to be; but then you usually sleep too soundly to be turning over. The mosquitoes sing rather emphatically in August; but then you can pull something over your head and stow your arms and defy them. It is so vivid that, in memory at this moment, I see through the cloth of the tent sides the flickering of the camp-fire and the gleam of the lantern, flickering about among the horses as the teamsters give them the parting good-night attention. And then the teamster comes in and lies down by my side and sinks into audible slumber and I dream

and think and hear the river sing and far away hear the hoot-owl calling over the forest's waste.

Once, in the night, I awoke and heard the horses stamping. It was near to two o'clock as I saw by my flash lamp and watch. Away off was a strange sound that I have said was like the swinging of a heavy iron sledge on a drill. I called to the teamsters and we went out. The sky was serene and the stars were twinkling, but the river fog was coming in over the valley. We listened to the sound and the teamster who is a college graduate and an over-seas "Y" man with a record of many passages in transport service said nothing except that he "did not know." At least the horses were all right and I mentioned the fact suggested in Robert Louis Stevenson's story of his night in the woods with his donkey. Perhaps it was a part of that mysterious hour of 2 A.M. as Robert Louis said, when the earth seems to breathe and the animals arouse; and men turn over in their beds; and birds stir in their nests and the horses tethered to their stakes, grow restless.

The camp-fire is a bed of coals and glowing red as a giant's eye in the gloom of the mists. We toss on another log. It blazes high. The open door of the tent is calling. We go back again; fall to sleep and know no more until the call "Roll out-t-t-t" comes at 4 A.M. and the day has begun again around the same camp-fire as saw us depart beneath the evening stars to rest.

ON "GOING TO THE MOVIES"



HAVE some friends who say that they do not enjoy the movies. "Neither do I," is my response. Yet, we meet about twice a week—at the movies. I notice that those who care the least about them go the most often.

The other evening I went to the movies alone. It was a good play. The hero was a hot-tempered boy who had a cool-tempered father. The villain was an understudy to the villainess, a blonde thing with a capacity for weeping large tears that glistened in the camera. Any one could see right away that she was bad. But the boy-hero couldn't. He was a diver by trade and she wanted some gold from a sunken treasure ship. He agreed to go down if she would marry him. I never suffered more in my life than I did during that ceremony. I wanted to get up and yell, "You darn fool." After the wedding they come home to their simple Maine seaside home and look at the marriage certificate. There is always a marriage certificate in the "movies." He goes immediately down into the depths and brings up some gold. It seemed a trifle, not over a wage-scale figure for diving, but it served for the story. The boy goes out for a time to get the air and comes home to find the marriage certificate torn up and all the pictures askew and the wife fled with her lover. The boy goes mad and bleeds at the nose and then—I found myself sitting in the theatre with my hat on—I was that excited.

Then there was a cabaret scene in Boston—the like of which I never saw in Boston and I've been

about a bit, and then the boy's father comes into Boston by the Boston boat from Maine, and goes right to the wayward villainess's table where she is sitting dolled up like an empress and where she sits with her sneering lover whose mustache curls up in approved style of villainy. Then the old man yanks the girl from her chair and fights his way out and smashes the villain on the nose.

Then I came to and found myself chewing the rim off my \$10.50 brown leghorn hat (50 cents for luxury tax, whereas the hat will wear me ten years).

Then the old man drags the girl to the Boston boat and locks her into a state-room. I saw him and yelled approval and stomped and kicked so hard that the chap in front of me turned around and glared. Then I was permitted to see the beautiful, wicked young blonde loose the shoulder straps of her passamenterie ball dress and begin to disrobe, and then when things were rather embarrassing and I was swallowing the ribbon on my hat, the scene mercifully changed to the outside of the state-room and the villain was knocking on the door. And then the villainess opened it just as though the old gent hadn't locked it. More lolling around in negligee followed and the man took off his coat, vest and collar, just to indicate familiarity and wickedness. The scene now shifted to the pilot-house. "Fog is coming on, Cap'n," said the mate. All is consternation! A derelict heaves in view. But the steamboat captains can't see it, even though the photographers could. Steamboat rammed the derelict. Terrible shipwreck. All saved but the villain and the villainess.

What of it? Why worry? I will tell you why we should worry. The foolish hero is delirious at home

up in Dorcasville, Me., yelling for his wife his father is bringing home as a soporific. Enter father without the wicked wife. Tearful struggle. Son rushes from the house with his diving suit yelling, "I will see her." Goes to wreck and sees the wicked wife and her paramour in close embrace, dead. Horrible sight! Boy's life line catches on a peg in steamer's side in the deep seas and the poor young man is doomed to die. Father plunges in; rescues the son; son makes up with father; and immediately the nice village maid who early and often loved the foolish hero, brings him a small pie to help him on toward his convalescence. The pie seems to bring the lad back to love. It was probably a blueberry pie. At any rate, he embraces the girl and father embraces them both and all is well. End!

Why do I like it? Action! Action! That's the word. World is hungry for "something doing." When weary with business, philosophy, high-brow stuff, gimme a movie as is a movie, and I'll eat my hat and be happy. I don't like the movies! Say! What's on to-night?

ON "PRODIGIES"



YOU CAN'T make a prodigy out of every child; but perhaps you can teach children more when they are very young. Seemingly ordinary children have been made into wonders when they have had wonderful teachers. We have had a notion that it does not do to force infant minds. Some others believe that you ought to begin forcing the mind as soon as you force the legs. If you did not ask a child to use its legs in walking until he were four years old, he would be slow to run. We let children's minds go wool-gathering until they are partially atrophied. Start in on the mind as soon as you do with the muscles.

Is this true? I don't know. I desire, simply, to set you to thinking. Wonderful what has been done in this respect! John Stuart Mill's father was a wonderful teacher—learned in the classics, historian, et cetera! he had John Stuart educated according to the Mill that grinds, himself the miller. Some of the books say that James Mill, the father, "unwisely forced the son beyond his years." But John Stuart Mill has left an immortal name—growing as authority as Spencer declines. He began to study Greek at three. At seven he had read all Greek classics in the original. At ten he had mastered mathematics. At ten he read Latin as well as English. At twelve he had done with books as anything but tools and had begun on constructive thinking, and his observations on logic began to be the foundation of his father's compilation. John Stuart Mill never played with other boys and never knew that

he was learned until he came to manhood. He simply thought that all other boys could read Greek as well as English and had all poets, all philosophies at his tongue's end. Mill never went to school except to his father until he was fifteen.

John Fiske had a wonderful grandmother. She believed that she was dealing with a record breaker, in John, and she was. When her baby genius was just toddling, she began to prepare him for college. At seven years of age he was reading Cæsar's Commentaries in Latin; making wise observations on the Tenth Legion; perusing Josephus for light reading and delving into Plato in the original.

At nine he spoke Greek. When he was ten he had read all of Prescott, Motley, Gibbon, Macaulay and Edward Gibbon. For a test to his memory he wrote a history of the world from Moses down to the date of his own birth, giving a list of the greatest men who had ever lived and a brief mention of what they had done. This book is still in existence.

When twelve, he had read Virgil, Sallust, Ovid, Juvenal and Catullus in the original. He had also mastered trigonometry, surveying, navigation, geometry and differential calculus. Before he was out of knee breeches he kept his diary in Spanish, spoke German like a native, read German philosophy in German, wrote poems in Italian and had translated Cervantes into English. At seventeen he read the Hebrew Scriptures like a rabbi and was familiar with Sanscrit.

John Fiske was no bookworm. If there was anything else he did not do, find it. He smoked like a furnace and, alas, he drank beer like a toper. He was

a fine, healthy, likable, mischievous chap. He was admitted to Harvard without any examination. There was not a college professor who had half the knowledge that he had under his hat. Students and professors looked on him with wonder. He studied thirteen hours a day at Harvard and grew fat on it. Prophecies were made that he would eclipse Humboldt, Newton and Mill.

Here the dissertation ends. I am talking purely about acquiring knowledge. What Fiske did with it was his affair. He was a great power in education, but no great discovery is attached to his name. He did not leave the heritage of Newton, Humboldt or John Stuart Mill. He smoked too much; was too sedentary; drank too much; was too lazy physically. He died of fatty degeneration. That was John Fiske's affair. His mind was a marvel. It comprehended wider range of pure learning than perhaps any other that ever lived.

My thesis is along the line of these two men. Could other minds have been developed by similar direction; by taking them when they were very young and instead of teaching them baby talk and kindergarten, teach them the realities?

I don't know. John Fiske developed only one great scientific truth—the strength of mental development in any animal is in proportion to its infancy or the length of time involved in its reaching physical maturity.

Note the emphasis on physical. Rare-ripes generally fall early. Newton and Humboldt developed slowly. Each lived to be over eighty. It is up to you.

ON "CERTAIN NOISES"



HE "putt-putt-putt—" of a noisy motor boat is the beginning of this talk. Why is it, that its intrusive and insistent noise is so disturbing? I have heard it of a morning and I know that some lobster fisherman is out earning an honest plutocracy pulling his traps, a perfectly fair procedure, yet it disturbs me. I can hear him coming from afar; hear him stop; start; snap out a couple of blasts; stop; start; go a few rods; stop and die away. But I know he is going to begin again. I can hear birds sing—they lull me to sleep. I can hear winds sigh and sigh; raindrops fall—they induce sleep, but this will not. I can hear a person snore in a summer camp provided he keeps on the job. But if he is one of those snorers who stop; pass off the earth; gurgle; stir in bed; begin to gather strength; snuffle; sob and finally blast forth again in another movement of the same concerto of noise and adenoid, why then I cannot sleep. I can lull myself to sleep in a boiler factory, or in a newspaper office with the steady mumble of hammers or machinery; but I couldn't go to sleep if a person were humming "Bubbles" in the next room. I can hardly keep awake to the rumble of the car wheels, the roar of passing trains, the echoes of empty stations through which the night express dashes on, but I can't sleep when a couple are whispering in the next section. "Drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds, but a boy beating a drum wakes the dead."

It is the rhythm of things that answers the question and along with that the adjustment of your being

to two essentials, excuse and regularity. A man running a lawn mower in the next yard at 4 o'clock in the morning, would be unobjectionable if he did not have to stop now and then to wipe his chin. If the nuisance only were not intermittent, he would become a part of the regular environment; but when I hear him I compare his enterprise with mine, his preparedness with mine, and I damn him into flinders for presuming to stop and start, like the motor boat man. Give us a world where motor boats, lawn mowers, wood sawyers and snorers, all motored, mowed, sawed and snored all the time and we would accommodate ourselves to them. This is why loving couples exist where both snore or either snores. Nobody is beyond adaptation; few enjoy the process.

Rhythm is the thing! The world is running very smoothly when the motors purr dreamily like the old cat on the hearth rug. It is the dissonance that shatters nerves. Thus music ministers, and bird-song joined to sea-song and earth-song make for peace and divine aspiration. When you go romping around the neighborhood making certain noises that interrupt nature, hold your neighbors in suspense as to what kind of a devilish cacophony you are going to perpetrate next, you are a sinner. It is up to you to put a muffler on your motor and plush lining on your lawn mower, or else run them on a rhythmic principle without interruption or doubt as to when you are going to resume. You know that old story of the man who roomed over a nervous person. He was undressing and thoughtlessly dropped a boot on the floor. He bethought himself and laid the next boot softly down and went to bed.

An hour later, a bang came on his door and this nervous person stood without, asking "Why! Why in hell don't you drop that other boot?" It was regularity and completeness of the job, that he required.

So, too, in all the world. We ask regularity, rhythm, completeness. We ask peace without interruption, the whole song in the day's work. Our nerves are frayed by selfishness, striving, envy, malice, hatred, bitterness, war, wrong, sin, injustice! These are akin to the certain noises of a summer dawn. They are interrupted rhythm. God intends somewhere, sometime, somehow, to still them and give us a dawn in which Nature shall alone sing and sing. And it shall be as the pulse beat of the Creator.

ON "GRAVES BY THE RIVER"



ALL ALONG the way of a Maine stream far from civilization, which we tramped last week, were occasional stones, huge blocks of granite on which were chiselings of dates, names or initials.

These were the mausoleums of drowned river drivers, thus memorialized in granite far more glorious than those of cemeteries of the rich—for they were by the side of the streams in which they lost their lives and within sound of the running waters.

One of these huge stones weighed possibly two hundred tons, its crest 25 feet high over the stream, its base in the lapping waters. This was on the Wissataquoik stream, a quiet August brook, yet a raging torrent in the spring. On the very top of this huge rock

was lodged a log, left there by the receding waters last spring. It hung thus far above the river and silhouetted against the sky line. On this rock also was the name of a drowned river driver.

Coming down the ford some of our party picked up the skull of a drowned man—one who was lost in the drive about a year ago. None of these men were ever brought out to their homes in the olden days; though they are brought out now if their bodies be recovered. Times have changed for the better or the worse, as you may estimate it. Personally, I would prefer to have my name chiseled on one of these giant rocks and sleep beneath it within the sound of the many waters and the radiance of the evening suns and the dawns magnificent. But most of those old-time river drivers were rovers and often wastrels who had no family connections and none to claim them or give them burial.

There is something impressive in these places of the dead. The birds nest about them and the camping grounds of old-time drivers are near at hand. I climbed up on top of one of them and looked over the winding stream, now babbling along. In the days of the drive it is a rushing torrent, the waters running through the bushes; the logs piling in huge pyramids swaying beneath the power of the flood. Often eight hours would change it from one condition to the other and a sharp rain would make it appalling as the drive came tearing in and the jam mounted to the skies. It was then no time for the boss to say "go"; he must say "come." Men lived in the water; slept on the bare ground in soaking clothes, often in the snow; lived on rough fare and hard work and yet had their triumphs; their joys and their raptures.

Some one ought to write a book on old-time river bosses and contractors for log driving. I never was so impressed by it as I was by a summer tramp over their now silent land. It seems to be a passing business—or rather a shifting business, new variations and new quirks to it. It has become more gentlemanly; more business-like and more considerate of human life now than then and in better condition. Tales of such old-timers as Russ Loveland would make good reading, for their human interest and their humor.

All told, there is something in bucking up against nature that is different from bucking up against the town. Here is nature as cold and cruel as life and death. The rain and the snow fall on men and women and pay no attention to their sufferings. There are but few things for shelter and none for comfort. Hunger is the mainspring of life. Want is the fundamental of economics. These men lying under the stones by the voiceful river are soldiers in the cause of humanity as much as is the soldier under the poppies. Hearts that are sore for those who lie afar, may perhaps get some comfort from the thought of these chiseled letters by the river of the north. One may well believe that thousands of memories turn daily countless times to distant memorials over graves of the dead. I am pleased to turn a thought to these rude stones of forgotten humble men, who gave their lives for humanity. It was a battle against Nature. It was a part of the economic law of life.

So many things in this world have compensations. I have been among these old river drivers this week—many of them, yet in the game, and showing deep pride in their past as men of accomplishment. Others

have graduated to operators, men of wealth and influence, bankers and farmers, and yet all of their talk is of the conquest of things. I am convinced by these rude stones; by the etchings of kindly hands in memorial, by the lives of power, that the law of life is work and that the only abiding joy is in accomplishment.

ON "GRANDFATHER'S CLOCKS"



GRANDFATHER always wound up his clock every night at ten minutes of nine o'clock and went to bed. Had the king been his guest, as he never was; were the minister there visiting at the protracted meeting, it made no difference, grandfather took out his old hunter-case silver watch, rubbed the cases abstractedly and lovingly with the stub of his thumb, cut off by accident at the first joint; took the watch key from the peg; wound the watch ostentatiously as a warning to young people of the passing of the hours and then, with steady step, approached the old clock in the corner with "Thomas Hoadley" in red letters on the dial, wound it loudly and then marched heavily and directly to repose. And when the clock struck nine he was in the sheets and pressed into the feather bed.

Old tall clocks have passed as insignia of thrift and regularity. Modern clocks are badges of plenty and many chimes. They have none of the odor of the founders; little of the mystery of the real antique. Often the odor of stale tobacco and the fumigation of the low Dutch was in those old clocks brought from over seas;

some of them with ships heaving on billows to the ticking; some of them with wooden works and wooden pendulums and high pedestals in which the old chaps could hide a jug of rum for the afternoon toddy. One of them that I once saw had an old cannon ball for a pendulum said to be of the War of 1812. Forty years ago, I wrote about an old clock in Canton with a proved age of 180 years, in one family. Alna and Whitefield, Me., were full of these old clocks brought over from Birmingham by old ship owners, the best of them made by Osborne and Wilson, having brass works, moon faces, mahogany cases and made to run eight days.

There was an old lady in Lisbon, Me., who had a clock that one of the collectors tried to buy thirty-five years ago. I know about it for the collector told me about it at the time and I am merely recalling old memories of early days of newspaper reporting.

She declined to sell. Here was her story of the reason why. "One day," said she, "after dinner I sat down to heel a stocking. The old clock stood there in the corner of the kitchen. When the Deacon, my husband, was alive he used to tend the clock. He would get up every Sunday mornin', build the fire, shave himself, wind up the clock and then sit down and drink two cups of Java coffee for his breakfast. He was very regular in his habits. He never ate his Sunday breakfast until he had wound the clock and he never touched it in any way except on Sunday mornin'. He never wound up the clock and then shaved; he always shaved and then wound up the clock. And it was always jest about the same time every Sunday mornin' that he got around to winding the clock. And that would be about twenty-five minutes of eight. Then he drank his two cups

of Java without sweetenin' and then read his Bible until time to go to church.

"After he died I couldn't bear to touch the clock no-how. I tried to wind it up the next Sunday mornin' but somehow it seemed so much like takin' his place, that I couldn't do it. So it run down and never was wound up afterwards. Well, as I was a-sayin', I set down to heel that stockin' in the afternoon I was tellin' you about when I happened to think that it was just two years ago to the day that the Deacon died. I was a feelin' kinder sad and lonesome when suddenly I heard the old clock in the kitchen. It sounded as though it was strugglin'. I ain't superstitious, sir, but it sounded to me jest like a husky gurglin' in a dyin' man's throat, jest as though he was a tryin' to say somethin' to me. The noise lasted only a moment or two and then the clock struck twice. I don't know what happened to me, but when I come to, folks was throwin' water in my face. I had the old clock stowed away and now money couldn't buy it from me."

I suppose more last wills and testaments have been found behind old tall clocks than in any other place; wills, bills, receipts and other important papers. Why? Because there was formality in dealing with the clock, in an old-fashioned home. Its winding and treatment were the prerogative of the head of the family. He alone touched it. Woe to the boy who peered into its case or touched its slowly swinging pendulum.

How many hours, as a boy, have I lain in the little room adjoining the kitchen and heard its slow stroke ticking away the hours of my early life! What time may be—not even the clock could tell; only the echoes

of its passing stirred the room and wearied the impetuous pulses of childhood. Age tended the clock. Age respected it as the sole arbiter of the swift flying hours of the sun. Childhood hated it. But childhood respected it; for then it meant something.

ON "SOPSEY-VINES"



AN YOU see, perchance, on this August morning, the back door of an old farm house stealthily opening and a small, barefoot boy standing there with bare head looking off toward the eternal hills? It is years long gone, and far away stretch the dusty roads, silent of the horn of the motorist, untouched perchance by even the passing wheel of the country wagon, the dust lying damp in the dews and the spider's webs along the fence rails glistening in the rising sun.

It is the beginning of the day of the orchard's fruitage and down the hill, past the pig-pen, through the shed, toward the brook with low-hanging elms over its course, the mowed fields stretch away with the apple-trees among them, cannily placed along the neighbor's fence that there might be so much the more land for hay. Here are the old trees; and each of them you know; all of their fruit you have sampled; each knurl and knot you know; each bird's nest is yours; each cuckoo that calls from the branches has been the object of your fruitless hunting with sling-shot.

It is first come, first served, in your family. First boy out under the apple tree, gets evening's fall and the morning's dull and soundless dropping. You! Oh

boy, are early. The others are in their beds in the hot attic, their stubbed toes peeping out from under the cotton sheet and the frowsy heads buried in the sweet morning sleep of boyhood. There is a repugnance to the trip across the field. Every old-fashioned boy recalls it. The stubble is wet; the stubble is prickly; the spiders' webs are ominous; snakes are said to be in the grass; there were rumors of a real "adder" being in the field the other day; the way is far; the cold water on a boy's feet, in early and sleepy dawn, is not pleasant to a boy who hates water only when it is fun.

You do recall the piercing of the stubble, don't you? You do recall the fragrance of the pig-pen. You do recall the odor of caraway and dank herbs, such as yellow dock and burdock, along the door as you swing it open and brush the juices of the weeds into action. You do recall stepping gingerly through the long, long path to the tree, that is the object of your journey. You do, somehow, recall the breezes that lifted the hair about your brow; the song of morning birds; the fleck of smoke from early kitchen fires as it arose upon the air, the fleecy clouds, the feelings of youth—for these be the undying memories that surge again upon us, even though we be gray and old. And do you recall the picture on the ground under the old "Sopsy-Vine"? There they were! Such monsters! Red, streaked with white; elongated; covered with dew; cold as ice; hardly bruised—Sops of Wine, indeed! Such apples nobody ever saw before, much less tasted; such apples no one, surely not you, will ever taste again. You sank your teeth into one of them, then and there, although hardly out of bed. The juices crinkled around your tongue

and ran out of the corners of your mouth. The sweetness and the tartness and the flavor of grapes, strawberries and things which you then had never tasted, but which were yet in the apple, filtered through your system. O! For another apple like that today!

I will leave you there, old-timer, under the apple-tree, crowding the scant pockets of your little linen pants with the dripping wet apples, until the stems pricked the flesh of your leg. I will leave you there filling the front tail of your shirt with them. I will leave you there eating toward a belly-ache with the blue-birds laughing at you, the winds playing with you, the bees bumbling about you, the crickets crawling up your bare legs.

I will come with you, old-timer, to your study or your office, and I will sit by you and put my hand on your shoulder and say, "Never mind! You are right about it. Sopsy-vines are all gone. There are no apples dropping now, in the August nights. There are no early-morning boys. You and I were the last. The trees are gone from the garden wall and all of the apples nowadays are imitations, developed synthetically, marketed before they fall; robbed of juice and never touched by the dew." I will say that, although, surely, it is not true. But I will say it because we shall both feel the better for saying it, knowing and hoping that it may not be true.

For alas! the world could not spare the "Sopsy-Vine"; nor the Boy; nor the cloud; nor the bluebird. Let us, dear friends, see to it that they be not separated by artificialities. Let us see to it boys yet shall rise in the dawn and seek their own apples. Let us know that down the ages untold come boys and boys and boys from Adam to the world without end.

ON "AN OLD NOTION OF WAR'S ENDING"



IN 1838, Samuel F. B. Morse exhibited before Congress the first working electrical telegraph. In 1840 (eighty years ago, and within the lives of many men now living), it became a practical device for the quick transmission of intelligence.

The smokes raised on distant hills by the Indians, the arms of semaphores on high hills in France were forms of telegraph; and the story of the dormouse that troubled the gardens of the telegrapher in the tale of Monte Cristo, illustrates the perfection of its use (and misuse) in earlier days.

I have been interested in some contemporary observations on the electric telegraph, have read some old newspapers of that day which relate in apparent amazement the wondrous tale. The world of that day stood before it as children stand before the Christmas tree, all its candles alight and full of wondrous gifts, wondering what it will bring to each one personally.

Similar reflections occur in the coming of other epoch-making inventions. One of them occurs forcefully in relation to the typewriter which has possibly done as much to reconstruct business methods as any other and I have yet other data concerning the coming of the telephone. In each of them, as well as of the wireless, the submarine, the airship, the electric light and the trolley, the attitude of society has steadily developed from amazement and doubt and the wildest conjecture, to apathy, until today we look to science to

solve our major problems as it seems to be solving those of Germany in its later discoveries of how to make something (nay, practically everything) out of nothing—that “nothing” being its limitless areas of “brown coal.”

In 1856, Col. Thomas H. Benton published his “Thirty Years’ View.” Col. Benton was a great Missourian and he differed from the average man from Missouri. He not merely wanted to know but he did know, and he knew some things that were not so. In his famous book recounting his thirty years’ service in Congress, chiefly if not wholly, as United States Senator, he refers to the electric telegraph. Col. Benton was inclined to prophecy, as he was to argument. No man of his age exerted more influence in debate; few spoke more frequently; none hated war more fiercely, and from the days of the Mexican War to the Civil War he fought armed aggression tooth and nail, by word, by deed, by vote.

You may be interested as I have been, to read what Col. Benton says in his book about the electric telegraph. In 1844, the first line of telegraph was in operation between Washington and New York, and in 1856, when the Thirty Years’ View was published, it was working over 80,000 miles of wire in America, and 50,000 miles in Europe. At this time Col. Benton wrote:

“It is one of the marvelous results of science, putting people who are thousands of miles apart in instant communication with the accuracy of a face to face conversation. Its wonderful advantages are felt in social, communal, political and military communications and in conjunction with the steam car, is destined to

work a total revolution in the art of defensive warfare. It puts an end to defensive war on the ocean, to the necessity of fortifications, except to delay for a few days the bombardment of a city. The approach of invaders upon any point, telegraphed through the country, brings down in the flying cars, the myriads of citizen soldiers, arms in hand and provisions in abundance, to overwhelm with numbers any possible invading force. It will dispense with fleets and standing armies and all the vast, cumbrous and expensive machinery of a modern army. Far from dreading an invasion, the telegraph and the car may defy and dare it—may invite any number of foreign troops to land—and assure the whole of them death or captivity from the myriads of volunteers launched upon them hourly from the first moment of landing until the last invader is a corpse or a prisoner."

Was not this, so far as Senator Benton went, a fine example of knowing a great deal that was not so? In six years from the time of the publication of this book of his, the United States was an armed camp. In eight years, standing armies greater than ever seen before in history, bivouaced and fought all over the soil of the South, and the sea was girt with ships in all sorts of warfare. Within the life time of his son, had he one, were to come transmission of speech almost around the world; transmission of intelligence without wires; ships beneath the sea and through the air, and a war in which more people were engaged than were in the confines of the United States when Col. Benton wrote his book. In 1836, he deprecated the enormous expenditures of the Federal government at 25 millions of dollars. Today we appropriate more

than that to please the passing whim of some school of philanthropy seeking to practice a higher school of eugenics.

Is not there a lesson in this? The lesson of progress! No invention comes that does not form the stepping stone to something greater. The next great invention is to be the discovery of a new force, an inexpensive source of energy in the atomic energy itself. Germany has solved her problems of fuel and many of its by-products. We shall stop organized war when we disarm the world through the medium of the Golden Rule—never by invention, deadly though it be. There will yet be deadlier.

ON "WHAT OUR FATHERS READ"



ANY FRIENDS have commented on our recent suggestions concerning reading aloud. It appears to be more common than we suspected and yet most of the comments are those of regret, along with us, at the passing of a wonderfully helpful custom in families.

Possibly one of the reasons why it prevails less than formerly is because of the superabundance of books nowadays—one for each member of the family each hour of the day, if he choose. Once a book was a treasure; now it is quite otherwise. Modern life has less regard for things that once were priceless. A boy's sled, a fine sled, worth several dollars of dad's money, has been left in my front yard for a week, by some boy who came there sliding with the other children. The snows buried it; but I have let it remain. Do you

suppose that forty years ago (when a boy's sled was almost as important to him as his automobile would be now), his sled would have remained out of his immediate keeping for even one night. Boys are surfeited with luxuries nowadays and, earning nothing by their own labors, esteem but little the things that admiring parents and loving relatives shower upon them.

So it is with books. I have been interested to look over the advertisement of an old bookseller in Boston, of the date of 1796. What sort of books do you suppose they sold in those days? Well, I can tell you something of their reading from this catalogue, and from what I have read elsewhere about the old-fashioned folk of ours, here in New England.

They read the "Life of Dr. Benjamin Franklin" which had by this time become a classic. Franklin died in 1790 at the age of 84. This could be read on Sundays, but not the life of Baron Trenck, which was the most adventurous of books and which is good lively reading at this day. His escapes from prison are most thrilling. But, as Thomas Bailey Aldrich says in his "Story of a Bad Boy," it never came from its closet of a Sunday. Morse's Geography was highly esteemed. I have a copy of this funny little book, somewhere among my belongings. And there were "Boyle's Voyages and Adventures in Several Parts of the World, full of Various and Amazing Turns of Fortune." This book was a pure fiction and surely was full of amazing turns of fortune including the story of Mrs. Villars with whom he escaped from Barbary, innumerable tales of pirates and gold. They approved of this book, especially for week days.

Carver's *Travels in America* is a book that you would like to find and read nowadays, I fancy. John Carver was a captain in the French and Indian War and he started in 1766 to explore the West and to reach the Pacific. He never reached the Pacific; but he explored a lot around Lake Superior and the Falls of St. Anthony and his book is lively. His escape from hostile Indians ranks well up among vivid tales of authentic adventures. We find in this catalogue a book that would be most interesting today: "The English Hermit; or the unparalleled sufferings and surprising adventures of Philip Quarll, an Englishman who was discovered by a Mr. Dorrington, a Bristol Merchant, upon an uninhabited island in the South Sea where he had lived for fifty years without any human assistance." Quarll declined to quit the island but gave the story of his life. Our grandfathers read it with avidity. It is a poor imitation of Robinson Crusoe, in some respects.

For fiction in those days there are such books as Fannie Burney's *Evelina* and her *Cecilia*, Sanford and Merton, *Rasselas*, *Tom Jones*, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, *Pamela*, *Roderick Random*, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Sicilian Romance*. Lewis's "The Monk" had just appeared but was not in this catalogue although England was ringing with it and with the new fame of the boy about twenty, who had written it. Desmond by the once admired Charlotte S. Smith, and Henry Brooke's wearisome *Fool of Quality*, are in this list. There are also Zeluco and Henry McKenzie's "Man of Feeling." Many of these books were coarse in speech and vulgarly out-spoken. They were stilted in style, too often. Only the simple ones have endured.

Sermons! This catalogue is full of them and of medical books, Scriptural commentary. Poems! Goldsmith, Thomson, Peter Pindar, Young's Night Thoughts, Dr. Watts and what is this? Ovid's Art of Love. Amazing antidote and bane! Great catholicity in this book-shop, for next to Pilgrim's Progress and Paley's Philosophy is Paine (Tom) "Age of Reason"—awful book of radicalism for the times—or any time. And what a variety of "Companions" for Young Women and Companions for Young Men—books on behavior and elegance. Chesterfield's Letters, Rochefoucauld's Maxims also; "Speakers"; elegant extracts!

Down in the bottom of this catalogue comes finally that treasure house of romance, the "Chapman Books." Who would not like to browse about among that bookstore in Boston or was it Leominster, as it was in 1796, and pick up a few first editions of *Evelina*, for instance. This was about the field of reading of the beginning of the 18th century. But they did make much of them and became wise and studious and good readers and writers.

ON "THE SLEEPING CHILD"



IN THE barber shop, the other day, a little boy lay asleep, waiting for his father. The little chap rested his head on his arm; his lips a wee bit parted; his breath coming and going as gently as the floating of thistle down; his fair hair in ringlets about his damp brow; in his hand a rubber ball, tightly clenched.

It recalled to me the story called "David Swan" that we used to read in the old school books (one of the truly great stories of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*)—of the boy who set out to walk to town and who loitered at the wayside spring and fell asleep. First came a man and woman in a fine carriage, stopping by the spring to water the horses and to rest a moment in the shade. The sleeping lad discloses his fair young face to the rich merchant and his wife and stirs memories of their own boy who had died and left them childless. They nearly wake the sleeping boy with a proposal to make him their son by adoption if possible, and thus put him in succession to a long line of fame and riches. But a trivial incident supervenes and they pass on, leaving him asleep, his little belongings clasped in his hand. Next comes a maiden seeking the seclusion of the wayside spring to fix her falling garter. The lad so fair and beautiful catches her eye and a blush mantles her cheek as she sees him unconscious. Thoughts of romance and of love stir her. She dreams of the fair lad and in fancy creates the home and the fireside. She stays there with him for a time, hoping that he may awake—and then passes on. Next come two thieves loitering at the spring to divide their

booty. They catch sight of the sleeping lad. He stirs uneasily. The robbers draw a knife and hold it suspended over the heart of the boy. He sinks again to sleep. The robbers divide their booty and, like the others, pass on their way leaving David Swan asleep, soon, however, to awake, look about, collect his tiny possessions, drink again from the bubbling spring and resume his way to town—unconscious that during his sleep, Riches had stopped at his side and passed by; that Love had come and gone its way, leaving him none the wiser for its beckoning, and that Death also had stood over him and waited only on the stirring of his limbs, the faintest indication of his consciousness, to descend on him like a pall.

There is nothing more suggestive of pathos and beauty and all the thoughts that this tale arouses than the sleeping child. Mothers and fathers love to stand by the side of the little ones lying fair, innocent and sheltered in their little beds. Many a "dad" would be ashamed to have it known even to his wife, how many times he has gone stealthily up the stairs all alone to get a glimpse of the little chap—poor little devil—so helpless with all the world before him. If the old "dad" has not felt his throat tighten and known the tear on the eyelid he is different from most "dads." Here before him is childhood, most beautiful, most fair and rosy, delicate as the petals of a flower. Out there, as "dad" stands in the suffused light of the room, is the roar of the world. The rumble of trains; the passing of the automobile with grinding gears; a hum like the distant roar of wild beasts—the voice of the World! The winds may rattle the shutters; the storm of snow

or sleet or rain may drive against the pane—the elements against the sleeping child! Here is peace—out there are Fame, Riches, Love, Death; any one of which may wait upon him to touch him as he sleeps.

The little boy held his toys in his hand! The little boy in the barber shop, I mean. The rubber ball he never gave up even in his sleep. We love our toys in this life. And why not? It is an implanted instinct, natural as it is for one to love the beautiful in nature. It is one of the God-given elements of humanity, the love of toys. And happy is the person who never overcomes the love for them and never gives over the habit of playing with the harmless toys of life. What more pitiful than to see the person who has forgotten how to play. Men and women whom the world has caught in the tumult out of doors and who cannot find, in nature, in books, in travel, in golf, in harmless pursuits and cheerful avocations the relief from the vocation that has been engrossing them are to be pitied, indeed.

Rest, peace, comfort, contentment—to what else do we aspire, when we have done our bit as men and women. Without consciousness of having played our part as true soldiers of life, we can have no comfort, no contentment. The measure of service should be the measure of our rest and our play. The amount we have done for fellow-man, in sacrifice, toil, duty, is the amount we shall receive. May we do it, like men and women, and sink to sleep, like the little child in the chair before me, in peace, our toys close clenched in our hands!

ON "THE CAVERN OF THE SNAIL"



DOWN by the side of the sea the other day, when all the way across to Europe went the long green waves breaking upon the shore, finally, at my feet, I saw a cleft in the rocks into which the sea bubbled now and then in yeast-like foam.

Its sides were hung in seaweed, festooned and drooping like curtains, and its base was smooth rocks and two or three bowlders. On the flat rock was the snail, fixed to the rock, alive of course, sentient maybe, with a life to live and a destiny to fulfill.

It occurred to me to translate myself into the terms of the snail, fixed to this rock, his world foreordained, limited, unchangeable! What may be its understanding of life? What may be its appreciation of the cosmos?

The snail's cavern is open six hours to the sun, the sky, the rains, the snows, the ice, the cold, the summer heat. Six hours follow in which the sea comes raging over it, first in waves, then in slow moving silence of a fathom deep. It has night and day, the stars shine on, the moon bathes it, the sun warms it. But never any prospect save the four walls of the cavern with its festoons of green seaweed, dull and dry or waving in the seas. It is far down in the bottom of the well. It is bounded by precipices which are as seven hundred feet are to us, and yet perhaps not ten feet high. It is there, in its world of perhaps sixty square feet. Poor circumscribed snail! And yet, no doubt, if it has any comprehension of the life of the snail, very busy,

very content, very full of wonder about its surroundings.

Something in that dark career of the snail made me think about ourselves and our caverns and our sense of appreciation of what is outside our outlook. Is it so very much less circumscribed than that of the snail in the cleft in the rocks with its draperies of seaweed? We occupy a world which is but a speck in the universe. We live briefly and our names and our graves pass into oblivion. Out of the millions on earth today not many will be remembered in a hundred years, only one or two in a thousand years. We are surrounded by stars which we never notice and over us roll suns and constellations of suns which make our own "snail's" cavern dark and narrow, indeed. We move within a limit which as to space is not so great as that of the snail as compared to earth. The limit of our sight, our hearing and our senses of smell and touch is so circumscribed that the eagle, the lobster and the hound each surpasses us. We cannot live in the water like the snail nor fly like the seagull.

Around us is a universe full of wonders. Beyond our sea of life, the atmosphere which is as truly a sea as that which surrounds the fish that swims, lie spaces infinite, untraveled, like those outside the twelve-foot space to which the snail itself is fixed immovable. We look up at it and see it and cannot reach it. It may be full of life. We know that it is full of action, etheric, molecular, electric, as surely as is the land above the dark abode of the snail. There may be sentient life there looking down on us transfixed here in our little world. Our scientists say that this cannot be. The snail may say the same. We know only so far as we

reason for ourselves, our method of sustaining life, our capacity to breathe and see and smell and taste. But the snail does not reason that way—if at all. He knows nothing of creatures that walk or have lungs and vocal organs!

If my speculations on the cavern of the snail lead me anywhere it is back to the spiritual. Whatever we are, are we not by virtue of our imagination and our dreams, in the line of the progressive development of the spirit which is the solution of the mystery? Is not THAT the thing to endure and to live and to go on and on? Is not this thing that impels my pen and makes me speculate on the destiny of the snail and of me, the thing that opens the cavern of the snail and of me? Vain the predications of man, vain all his categories touching life! He knows nothing because he reasons from his cavern! It is only when he dreams beyond it, when his spirit soars, when his intellect rides on the wings thereof that he breaks the barrier and touches the hem of the garments of God.

ON "FALL PICKLING"



AM forced to consider this topic by the insistent demands of persons who have noses. They smell spices all along the way from home to shop and they telephone or come ambling in here with kindest of intent and remark diffidently that they have "a subject for a just talk."

I have no nose—at certain seasons. Rag-weed time and fall dandelion season diminishes its efficiency, although it does not diminish its activity, or its size. So, I may say that I am the more obliged to those who smell for me.

From kitchens along the way, even those shut off from view by high hedges, there come stealing—so I am informed—subtle odors that suggest autumn, in New England, and have suggested other autumns from the days of Plymouth Colony. O! The pickles that New England has made; the New Englanders that have been pickled and still are being pickled by the consumption of the puckery juices of vinegar and sugar and spices.

I suppose that the cucumber is the proudest product of the astringent art, when properly cured in the acetic. You can't beat a small pickling cuke, except by a small pickling onion, and by a small pickling tomato, and by a small pickling pear, and by a small pickling plum and by a small pickling quince, and if I have left out any, it is because I have lost my cook book. When the air of a housewife's kitchen is properly charged with the aroma of the mingled fruit of vine and cane I rather weep there than at the movies—

even though it be a Connie Talmadge six-reeler. You know—there is no bliss like mouth-watering. I am going to write about mouth-watering some day as a question of the anticipatory delights in the human psycho-physiology. There is a subtle subject for anyone, properly handled—what makes the mouth water? Is the appetite an ascendancy over the mind or the mind an ascendancy over the appetite?

I am informed by one man that over thirty miles of cucumbers placed end to end will be pickled in this town this fall. Placed in a double row they would reach twice as far. Placed in a circle and they would take in a territory the size of the recent Republican majority in Maine. Picalily is the favorite beverage of Maine pickle-eaters. I do not know as that is the way to spell it. There are some people who will rise from a sick bed and eat picalily. It is made of something—I know not what. It smells as though the gods had a hand in it and the Queen of Sheba brought the spices when she came to view the wonders of King Solomon.

In the old days, there was a lot of activity on pickling day—just the same as there was on the day when we cut up the pig. I have sliced green tomatoes in days gone by until my fingers were all crinkled up with tomato juice like the fringe on an aged curtain. When we pickled, Mrs. Quint came over from the next house and Tryphosa Rideout and Cleora Carr, and said: "Land sakes, you picklin'." And they tasted for ma. Ma had tasted and tasted until "Mercy Me!" she had no taste left; everything tasted alike. And I had tasted and tasted until I had a pain in my stomach. And father had tasted and tasted until he was full of quince, and tomato, and plum, and cucumber, and ketchup, and

chili sauce, and sweet pickles, and pickled melon rind, and pickled grape, and pickled citron, and pickling pumpkin, and pickled prickly pears that Peter Piper picked.

Now Tryphosa! DON'T you think that the picalily would be better if it had a little more sugar in it?" And yet all agreed that to touch it again, so much as to lay a finger on it, would be to mar the finest picalily ever produced since Eve put up apples. Surely Tryphosa never suggested a change. And Tryphosa who was unmarried, carried home much of the treasure of the kitchen when she wended her way to her lonely domicile. O, thrift! thy name is preserving and pickling! Will it ever pass away as a happy custom? I hope not, for then we shall be a dying race. The Lord preserve us! The Lord pickle us, if need be. Boaz courted Ruth with vinegar. He did not offer her sweets, and ice cream! He asked her to sit beside him in the field. "Come hither," said he, "and sit beside me at meal time and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."

This pickling is old in custom. Its fragrance hath not departed. Amid all of the turmoil of the times, amid the contentions of war and wage, these simple things will yet call us back to home and mother.

ON "WOODLAND POOLS"



ARCUS AURELIUS draws lessons from the bubbling spring that makes the pool in the woods. It is clear and sweet—as are some human souls running away to do good; sweetening the earth around it; making blossoms to grow in the pathway. The stagnant pool is covered with scum and infested with evil. So are stagnant souls. Enough said.

To me, with head pillowed on a stone, nothing is so fair as glimpses of water through trees, intervening trunks, waving tops, grassy land intervening all rolled out smooth or left in the rough just as Nature pleases. I find no landscape exactly to my liking unless it has the gleam in it.

Wandering through woods, to come on a clear pond, smiling to you up out of its loneliness all there all ready to be loved and laved in, is to find a blessing. I have had such experiences lately and if I could only tell of the emotional stir that they give to me, I would be a poet indeed. I have in mind one from a cabin door. It is reached by a winding water-way beyond a dam and herein the wild duck comes to idle, the muskrat to swim slyly, and in its surface I have seen otter and once a beaver—I swear it.

That was a triumph. The hardhack trims the edges of the brook that leads into this woodland pool. It grows out far into the water, and around it swerves the current as you have seen it in many a pond entrance. I can push my boat stilly into this brook and never make a ripple. The fireweed dyes it; the pines bend over it; a mountain shades it; an eagle soars over

it; a wind kisses it; a wave sings to it; a cloud swims in it. I saw the beaver—I did, I did. He swam toward me all unconscious and in an instant he was gone and I was breathless. All I could hear was the king-bird chattering like a “stout-chested swallow” and the frog by the shore “like the tap of a drum when the human legions are gathering.”

I do not know anything finer than to stumble upon, thus to surprise a living wild thing in the woods, or in the waters. These ponds are their terrain—these waters their castle, and nobody is expected to visit uninvited. And so this beaver was stubbing along pounding the water and possibly going on an errand to a beaver-shop when I disturbed him. O! the joy of the inland pool.

I love their shores serrated and often sedgy, their islands (perhaps I am roaming into real ponds but let's roam) so useless except for birds and ducks and insects and scenery; their moods so abrupt; their glories so reflective. I have seen my inland pool, a pond if you like, come to a feathery fury in a moment and then smile at you again through tears of rain, with a rainbow in the eastern sky arching the mountain top. I have lain in a boat over the side thereof and seen all of the color of sky and hill, of autumn and of sunset and empurpling deeps of the velvet afterglow, live in its bosom, and all of the while the inland pool seems to say: “I am clean and pure, how are you?”

I wish that everyone in the world could come to Maine in October and rest on the bosom of such glory. There would be so much less unrest; so much better appreciation of what is really worth while. I wish that we could take you all out of stuffy cities, out of cab-

arets, out of theatres, out of cellars, out of palaces, and introduce you to the inland waters of Maine. I wish we could have the winds off our mountains and the sweet breath off the waters at your feet blow the fogs and mists out of your brains that you might see the clearer the true values of this life. I would rather be a hermit in a cabin by the shore of living waters than a billionaire in a city block condemned forever to the desk. I could not live without finding in the hills and by the stream and on the lake and in the deep green silences of the inland pool the religion of my worship.

Let the rain descend; the sun burn, the winds blow! What matter it? Here are the temples of the Most High. The winter comes here by my inland pool early and yet so sweetly, in tiny tickings against bare trees; in snowflakes falling into still waters; in the earth covering of white in the night. The chickadee stirs by the cabin door, the partridge rustles through the thicket. Yet the same stars come out at eventide; the same moon shines in the night and the same Plan deals with the inland pool, as with my soul.

ON "AMIABILITY AT HOME"



SUALLY, husband and wife start out with everything that should go to make up a picnic. They have a tent over their heads, bread and meat and everything fine in their hamper. But often they fail to put into the basket, a touch of that divine salt, known as amiability.

Mr. Greeter and Mrs. Greeter—none could be sweeter! He runs a shop and is amiable as a basket of chips when you see him behind the counter. His benevolent face fairly beams as you go in to buy his goods. He ripples with tales and runs over with stories. He is what is called "an ever genial." The village newspaper so says, and so saying it must be true. Mrs. Greeter goes out to the meetings of the village sewing circle and is the life of the party.

But at home! Oh boy! Greeter has worn out his amiability at the store and Mrs. Greeter has worn out hers at the club. The pinch of the "divine salt" is everywhere but in the home-basket. He begins to glower as soon as he locks up the shop. She begins to "hate things" as soon as she unloosens her corsets. He begins to "taste bitter" as soon as he smells the supper. She begins to look like a dill pickle as soon as he says "boo!" He has a gift of sarcasm; she has a gift of repartee. He has a power of suggestion and she has a power of seeing the same. He has the art of silence "that speaks louder than words;" she has the power of words that makes silence seem like heaven. He can say things in a look and she can look things by saying them. They have a nice picnic-basket—everything in

it from soup to dessert and not a pinch of the stuff that gives it savor—amiability.

There are a good many people who are this way. I believe that this writing will touch more than one of my readers where he lives. And it is too bad. It is only a habit and nothing intentional. It would be well if we had schools of amiable domestic science where husbands and wives could be taught the manner of peaceful household life. Amiability is a habit. Unamiability is a habit. We are not so different from some of the lower animals—the dog, for instance. A dog may be easily ruined in disposition by not being properly educated in being good-natured. He may get to be so bad that he will not even waggle his tail. Some people equally refuse to waggle.

Of course, I know that sermonizing is a foolish habit also. I can go about telling people that they all should be amiable at home as they are capable of being in business. Will they? They will not. But maybe some person may feel that if he and his wife and the children could somehow get a sort of understanding; form an Amalgamated Union of Amiables, it surely would add to the joy of living. The home would be as pleasant as the club for that man and that woman and the children might get a pinch of the enduring “divine savor” of life.

Of course an amiable man is happy. You can't deny that. If a man is not amiable, he is not happy. If he is an “abused party,” he is not happy. If he is cross about something all of the time, he is not happy. If one-half of him is not amiable, he is not happy. If that half is the “better half” so much the worse and yet, again, so much the worse also if the wife be amiable and

the husband be the reverse. You must "pass the salt." You must have a well-savored household to be happy. Sometimes one saint in a household will savor it. I have known a household where the people were ordinarily very "touchy" and far from amiable as to disposition, but all of them savored by a white-haired saintly woman who never spoke except as in kindness and in a low, sweet voice, and who lived as she spoke. Thus what one puts in the hamper does do some good, if all will partake of it.

But O! my! What is the use of having a home where there is nothing but eternal squabbling; where no one ever waggles; where no one laughs and loves and lives the life of sunshine. What is the use of a household where there is plenty of bread and cheese and no kisses. What is the use of wasting all one's smiles on the customer and none on the partner? Stevenson called his happiness "a great task." But he did it, in spite of his illness. "If I have faltered," wrote he, "in my great task of happiness; if I have moved among my race and shown no glorious morning face; if beams from happy human eyes have moved me not; if morning skies, books and my food and summer rain have knocked at my sullen heart in vain, Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take and stab my spirit broad awake."

ON "A WOMAN HANGING OUT THE CLOTHES"



WOMAN is hanging out the Monday's washing at the house just across the lawn at the summer cottage and she stands erect with the wind blowing her skirts.

"A good, old-fashioned New England picture," says my neighbor on the other veranda. She has clothespins in her mouth and she stops now and then to look at the sea and the sky.

There is a cow tied to a rope with a stake driven in the ground, giving her a limited range for feeding. The cow has a broad white belt, made by nature, around her girth, but her forequarters, feet, rump and tail are shiny coal black—a picturesque cow, if I do say it, and worth \$50 additional to the rent of this cottage, merely because of the white-belted aristocracy that she implies.

It is noon. Everyone is at dinner—New England style—and it is as still as the desert. There is a sort of common or public field out in front of our veranda and this is without life except the cow, who bends munching into the grass. You may, perhaps, hear insistent voices of folk at their noon-day tables, or occasionally the voice of a child, unseen.

There is a soft south wind lazily moving the pistils of the flowers and the fronds of the firs. Birds are cheerfully doing a bit of noon-day chirping; but birds do not sing at noon as at dawn. Swallows flit over the field and soft sighs are in the spruces.

The woman hanging out clothes stirs memories enough to fill a book. Something in her attitude must have stirred my neighbor to his thought. I wonder

what made him silent for so long a time, unless his thoughts went back to old times and old memories. And it is all in the way you see things. We see sights not with the eyes and hear sounds not with the ears. "Between the tree of the clown and the tree of Milton or of Shakespeare, what a difference," says Leigh Hunt, "and between the plodding walk of the sexton over the lea and that of Gray, what a difference. What a difference between the Bermudas of the shipbuilder and the Bermoothes of Shakespeare; the isle full of noises and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not; the isle of elves and fairies, that chased the tide to and fro on the seashore; of Calaban and Ariel, of Miranda and Ferdinand."

The common meadow is a sorry thing to a ditcher, but to the neighbor who sees my cow and the woman hanging out the clothes erect, with the wind blowing her hair and her skirts, it has a romance that weaves into fancy of old New England.

Probably he sees an old house into which he could go today after forty years have passed and walk through it in the dark or with closed eyes and make every turn, and take every hidden step, and go direct to the old water-pail for a cooling drink. Probably he hears the washboard rattle and the churn go, and the clothes wringer creak and smells the suds. Probably he connects with it Christian virtues, sober surroundings, good counsel, long lives, peaceful deaths, patient hands folded over tired bosoms. He hears church-bells ring and sees summer blossoms turning to golden-rod, and frosts and snows and piling drifts and sobbing eaves and snapping fires and evening lamps and drifted yards and everywhere thru it a woman hanging out the

clothes, clothespins in her mouth, her skirts blowing in the wind, wisps of her hair under her shawl in winter, under her cap in summer.

I have only shut my eyes this day and talked this to a stenographer and it has all come to me, simply enough as a matter of fact. Leigh Hunt again says in that wonderful little familiar essay of his on "The Realities of the Imagination": "Its verdures, sheep, its hedge-row elms, all else which sight and sound can give, are made to furnish a treasure of pleasant thoughts."

ON "THE CLAM"



HE Latin name of the clam is *Mya*, which is possibly a corruption of "more," one of the attributes of the clam. The name clam comes from "clamp" which is a derivation of "clamma," meaning a narrow pass. If you have sufficient imagination, you may figure out the derivation from these terms. I should hate to meet a clam in a narrow pass with the villain still pursuing. I should be afraid of delay, in case the clam were in a stew.

Further to pursue the clam thru the narrow pass to its ultimate etymology, permit me to add that its complete name is *mya arenaria*, speaking of the *Saccarappa* clam, and *Venus Mercenaria* for the hard clam or the quahog. Why they should ever call a hard clam a mercenary *Venus*, beats me. Mercenary *Venus*es have served me with "little necks" on the half shell before this, but who was the clam and who was the *Venus*, is a matter of record and I am not compelled to incriminate myself.

A young hard clam is a little neck and an old hard clam is a rough neck. There are two kinds of clams—hard clams and soft clams—just like corns and bunions, if you will excuse me for the analogy. The hard clam is called a clam in New York and a quahog in Boston, and, as usual, Boston is correct. The Boston “clam” is soft. The Maine clam is Bostonese in culture, in resilience and in flavor, intensified by the climate as is everything toothsome in Maine. Mud clams are a poor relation of sand-clams. A sand-clam is as white as the driven snow and as small as an old-fashioned pay-envelope. You rake in a hard clam but you have to dig for a soft clam. Of course it is absurd to call a Maine clam “soft,” because he is about as hard to get nowadays as a dish of real prunes. The residue of hard clams is scallops; the residue of soft clams is a dreamy feeling about the wesband and a decision to have some more tomorrow, only to have them fried.

“The Mya has a comparatively thin, smooth, elongated shell, a protusile, blade-like foot useful in digging, and siphons that may be longer than the shell.” I find this description in the encyclopedia and credit it—only what I thought was the clam’s head seems to be his foot. It was so once when I went to call on a girl, whom I knew. I met her father at the door and what I thought was her dad’s head proved to be his foot. Chicago people who have never before seen a Maine soft clam eat their feet. I mean the clam’s feet. Chicago is strong on feet. I went to New Meadows Inn once with a Chicago friend and I had to drag him away from the table—he persisted in chewing the clam’s feet the way one chews gum.

The clam is a silent animal and has won a reputation for keeping its mouth shut, that surpasses that of some politicians. I never knew why the clam got such a reputation; for, left to himself, he opens up widely without much of any urging. When I was a boy we used to get a half bushel of clams for ten cents or so and used to feed them a pint of corn meal. The clams would then begin to sing in a clamorous way and would run their heads (I mean their feet) out, worse than a seashore girl with a new pair of silk hose. I have seen clams with a jag of corn meal elongate their feet several feet, collectively. The corn meal made the clams sweet; removed the grit; plumped them up, and you averaged to get about five pounds more of clam, and the clams died happy.

Old Uncle Hodgdon of my town was the most persistent clam-digger that I ever saw and he knew more about clams in a sympathetic way, than any other man I ever knew. He used to say that the clam was in reality a very sensitive and wise creature and he could tell the weather by the way the clams sang when he dug them. But then Uncle Hodgdon was selling clams—with accent on the selling—throwing in the music. He died standing on the clam-flats looking off to sea with a clam in his hand. All of which is a digression merely to fill space. I have dissected clams in college and found them messy. My zoölogical research ended with the clam, but I have kept it up in a gustatory way more or less ever since, and am willing to declare that the soft-clam is the finest flavor indigenous to the United States of America, barring none. I fancy that the truth of this broke on Uncle Hodgdon and killed him.

The moral is that we do not often appreciate the things that we have at hand—the blueberry, the clam, the string bean, the baked “yaller-eye,” New England brown-bread, Injun pudding, stewed bean soup, salt-cod and pork scraps, tongues and sounds, salt mackerel, bannock, flapjacks,—why continue. I shall have you all drooling.

ON “SAND”



NE time, years ago, we came down out of the town of Silverton, Colorado, by the way of the Los Animas canyon. It was at sunset and the peaks of the “Needles” were bathed in the red glow of the sun. These peaks are well named. They rise far into the sky, and are as sharp as the name that has been given them. In our party was a geologist. He looked long at them and said, “We call that hungry granite.” What a fine characterization! Granite as sharp as teeth—hungry, literally, for the flesh and bone of the adventurer.

The other day, on Katahdin, the granite lay in strange groupings over the mountain tops. Not “hungry” but well-fed looking granite, huge obelisks of nature, prone. Hundreds of thousands of them lay scattered about, as tho some giant had flung them there in disorder. On Abol plateau, five or six miles square and up four thousand feet, these giant sarcophagi lay among the caribou moss and amid the alpine blueberries with a weird suggestiveness of tombs. They were enormous of size in many cases, often forty or fifty feet long, and scooped out on the top as tho by the ice-storms and the glaciers. And then, from there to

the peak, nothing but these wonderful blocks of granite piled criss-cross, literally making mountains.

Down the "slide" from Abol to the base is another step in the process; loose stones made of these same granite blocks, disintegrated by the floods, split by the frosts, torn away from the mountain side, perhaps with a noise of thunder dashing to pieces as they fall. No one can tell the thunder of the tearing apart of this mountain in the winter and the spring. It must make a chorus to the very gods. And beneath these loose stones is a coarse, granitic sand, fragments as big as peas, and small as mustard seed, and so sharp and cutting as to tear the feet and the gloves. It crunches under foot like frosty snow in midwinter. It rolls away beneath the feet like the lava dust of Mt. Vesuvius.

The farther down the slide you go, in your return from the mountain, the finer the sands become. There is a "Sandy Stream" where the sands are reasonably fine and white and where the shores are sprayed into little beaches. And so on down the Wissatiquoick, swift running stream, is sand; and in the reaches of the East Branch of the Penobscot into which the Wissatiquoick empties is this sand. And in the eddies by the little camp where we stopped at Lunkasoo is sand, and so on, I doubt not, to the greater Penobscot river and the sea and the infinite oceans flows this sand,—silt, soil, disintegrated mountain.

And so the other day as we sat by the sea and let the whitest of white sand filter thru the fingers, fine enough for the hour-glass that marks the passing of the years, I was asked by a lady, who sometimes reads these things, "What could you write about sand?" And I said, "Not much; but the wise man could write

And I said, "Not much; but the wise man could write the story of the mountains, the sea and the soil. God talked much about it. It was on His lips when He promised Abram to make his a great nation. Isaiah discussed it. The Psalms are full of it. The Synoptic gospels use it as a simile. Jesus talked often of it. His foot pressed it on Galilee. The man who builds his house on it shall not prevail." And more to the same purport.

Sand is substance with the dirt washed out of it, the weaker things eroded, the resistant quartz, mica, feldspar, magnetite left in it. Storms beat about life; about man; about social systems, and they fall and run away; but the sand remains. It runs its course; finds its level; and while the democracies fall, and nations pass, and civilizations run their courses as the mountains are leveled and the elements tear apart their fibre, there remains the sand. And what of the sand? It makes the greater part of our soil. It builds our fertile land. It lays our roads of commerce. It resolves into wheat and corn and bread for man. It feeds life. It is the residuum of human development.

I sit idly, therefore, and let this sand run thru my fingers. Little children play in it and build it into dams. But all the while, as the lady has set me thinking, I see the inequalities of life, the cruel tips of the needles; the wrongs of society; the hunger and the sorrow, all being leveled as the mountains to make the soil of our own regeneration. If you miss the application you discredit Progress as the law of life! For saith the Psalmist, "Thy Righteousness, O God, is like the great mountains. Thy judgments are a great deep. O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast."

ON "FORMING ONE'S PERSONALITY"



NOBODY can tell—perhaps it is fortunate—what has gone into forming his personality, for if he could he would be wasting his time in hunting for similar influences for his offspring; for every man, deep in his ego, has a notion that his son should grow up like himself and his daughter like her mother. We hunt the receptacles of our beings as one hunts over an old trunk in which he has kept his mementoes of the past. We find in it trifles that have impelled us to do this thing or that—a chance word, a turning down this road some summer day instead of down the other road; a good teacher in the winter term of school instead of a bad teacher. They are all purely accidental, as it seems, and little to be explained unless we accept the creed of the fatalist and believe that our lives are ordained along certain pathways. Of two boys, one summer day, long ago, who stood by the side of an idle saw-mill deciding how to start up the machinery and see the wheels go around, both wanted to be the sawyer on the log. They drew lots and one of them, after they had laboriously opened the gates and started up the old, up-and-down saw, stepped to his place. He slipped and the saw cut a cruel gash in his hip. He has since been a cripple. I see him every day or two on these streets. Had the other boy drawn the coveted chance, would he have been the cripple for life?

But of all of the influences, outside the home and these strange intrusions of fate, the teacher has the

most influence. A newspaper man once said to me: "My first spur to ambition to win was in a prize offered in school when I was seven. I won it; for scholarship. It was a single-bladed Jonathan Crookes jack-knife. I had never owned a jack-knife. Parents had no money, in those days, for luxuries for children. If you got a jack-knife you earned it. A few days later a barefoot boy went berrying with his jack-knife in his little pants pocket, every few moments taken out and looked over and rubbed bright with loving fingers. On his way home, after a seeming momentary thoughtlessness of the knife, the pocket felt empty and the boy-heart stood still. There was a tiny hole in the pocket. The knife had gone. It never was found. The grief was greater than any that seemingly ever has come to me. The influence was double—aspiration to get somewhere if possible in life; overcoming of griefs over loss of material things.

"The first book that ever suggested the desire to write anything," continued the man, "was Washington Irving's 'Sketch Book.' It seemed as tho here was something that perhaps I could imitate. And then Knickerbocker's History of New York, and then in swift succession 'Roughing It' and 'Innocents Abroad.' We happened to have in the school a library of about a thousand volumes, well selected and full of valuable literary suggestion. Among others we had a series of books on English literary men. We had also James T. Field's most delightful reminiscences of authors. This had the most potent influence on many boys. We all 'took out' books every Saturday and the post of librarian was most envious. I got to be librarian and could, of course, go to the book-cases, take the key from my

pocket and with almost bursting pride take from the library any book I desired. I read nearly every one of them in two years. Two books a day was nothing for me to take home and run over or else read them as I pleased. We had a number of old books given to us for the library. Winter vacations we used to go to the school-house and catalogue them. What fun we had by the warm fire in the school-house, with the old books piled around us and we three or four boys reading or numbering or pasting in labels or happily lying on the pile of books by the stove hearing someone read. It was better than poolrooms.

"A teacher had a great influence in determining my bent for the newspaper life. He found me industriously reading newspapers and books and he called me to his home one evening when I was in the High School and asked me what I was going to try and make of myself in life. I knew as little as most boys of fifteen. He said: 'If I were you I would try to be a newspaper editor.' The seed was implanted, then and there. Horace Greeley was nowhere, in comparison with my ideals. From then on, I never had any idea of being anything else and never have had any other idea since."

The influence upon a boy through reading and his teacher is very great. Parents cannot absolutely control the reading by children but they can direct it, by means of talks and inquiry. You cannot find a great author who has not been influenced by some great book. The intimacy of the old country school was its greatest asset. The great number of students in modern universities is their greatest liability. No student gets the intimate touch with the teacher, where the class

numbers a thousand. When I went to college we had only 130 students in the four classes. We are riding the waters of life's stream like leaves on a mountain brook. Fortunate are we if we find a peaceful eddy and have sunshine of good influences playing upon our way.

ON "GRANNIE"



HEY tell me that there is a new-fangled grandma abroad who objects to being called "grannie" and asks politely to be called "nanna," "sweetie," "pittygamma," anything but grammar or alphabetagamma.

One of the blessings of the war was the interruption of the grandmother in unmaidenly pursuits. When the war broke out in July and August, 1914—how swift the years—the grandmother was Queen of the Beach and the Whole Thing in the Casino. She limned up against an horizon shamefully. She looked sixteen behind and sixteenth century in front. She studied tango, whango, bango; maxixe, praxixe; how to play bridge, look young and dance between the eats—all in one evening. She went out with the chickens and came home with the roosters and never wondered how she could do it. When she wanted to dance on the revolving floor of the Broadway cabaret or in the casino at the beach, she brushed the Young Things out of the way and made for the center of the floor and stood waiting with her Finger in her Mouth. Her skirts rustled when she walked and she was the Fluffy Ruffles of the household. She had all of Grandfather's money and could afford lingerie and hosiery that would

make angels pine. And she wore 'em and wore 'em high. Moving away, slowly undulating with mature technique, she fooled some of the lads for the Time-Being. When she was not laced too tight she could do three turns around the hall and not puff or wince. When grandfather was alive, she danced him until his Tongue hung out. After he passed on and the period of mourning was over, she reserved a table next to the Jazz band and sat there expectantly, younger than ever and with more lingerie. When certain Young Things commonly called granddaughters remonstrated with her she said, "He! He! I can't help it if I *am* attractive." After the war broke out "grannie" was the last to leave the Floor and after they had put out the lights she sauntered chattily home with the boy-drummer and the Head Banjoist.

I must say that the war sobered off grandmother—somewhat. She gradually got so she could go to sleep without having a boy play the Cymbals to her; sort of smiled and took up knitting again and got her feet out of the high-heelers into a pair of knit bed-slippers with convenient holes in them and began to think about domesticity again. She was a real "grannie" after all, for the heart of grandmothers is all right wherever you find it—whether she ambles up and down the board walk with a green parasol and a fine sky-line or whether she is hanging out the clothes in the back yard with the clothespins in her mouth.

But there are a few things that "Grannie" must not forget. She's "grannie." She is no "cutiecute"; no avatar of Salome; as a rule no reincarnated Loie Fuller. She inherits a name that is dearer than any other except one, and in some respects that beats even that one,

for it signifies two mothers in one. She calls up quaint and happy memories and blessed suggestions of supernatural kindnesses; for old-fashioned grandmothers were not so fussy about diet as are modern mothers and they will slip a doughnut to a hungry boy between meals sometimes and often they have a little bit of change for a lad for the Fourth of July. But when you find a grandmother who gets mad when a child calls her "grannie" and who wants a milder euphemism for the title of a double maternity, the chances are that she is an ex-tango-hound and would like the bright lights even yet.

The other day a little boy in Lewiston came over to his grandmother's house and had a long talk with her about grandmothers. The grandmother who is a lady of fixed notions about womanly duties and old-fashioned motherliness, related to me the whole of the talk—which may make another story some day. After it was all over and the little chap picked up his cap and started to go, he turned back and said, with a kiss by way of emphasis, "Well, anyway, Grannie (reflectively), you are just grannie; you aren't one of them bernanna grannies, are you?"

ON "HELPING THE BOY"



ERE and there you find a man who thinks of boys in terms of their potentiality and who desires to help them. They are always good men and they want boys to grow up to be good and useful men. How many men who may read this give any thought to boyhood except as it comes within the range of their own families and how many ever pay any attention to the deserving, needy boy to whom a life, now, would mean a life of enlarged usefulness and benefit to society?

Forty years ago, one summer noon, I stood in front of my home watching some boys playing baseball in the street. I was through the high school at the age of fifteen and wanted to go to college for which I was fitted. I saw the fine young son of a wealthy man coming up the street and envied him; for he was soon to enter Harvard. He stopped and we fell into talk and he asked me if I were going to college. I begged the question and he went along. That night the boy's father asked me to his house and put up a proposition to me that I could accept—a very business-like proposition that enabled me to keep my self-respect; pay back my indebtedness when able and get through college. All he did was to give me a lift when I needed it. He lost nothing; I gained everything. I taught school and carried my meals in my pocket to and from college and never noticed that it was observed by anyone; or if it were it operated to no personal discomfiture or any loss of friends. It taught me the value of money and the value of thoughtfulness toward boys. I never have forgotten it, for a day or an hour, and have done what I

could for other boys, in part payment for the other boy's thoughtfulness and the kindness of his father. I am not saying this in any self-appreciative way. It is merely a fact.

The value of a boy is considerable. The railroads pay a fixed sum (in some states of the Union, \$10,000) for a man whom a railroad has killed in an accident. A live boy, saved to a life of usefulness, is worth more than a dead man. This is why all sorts of socialized endeavor to save boys from vicious ways and direct them to ways of human betterment, are commercial economy. This is why we go into community work to keep boys from the streets. It pays. It adds a factor of production; it subtracts a factor of expense, when we convert a person who might be a criminal liability into a productive asset. It adds something else than material value; it adds to the well-spring of idealism and religious and ethical impulse which must underly the city or the state, if it is to be a good city or a good state.

This writing was suggested by Dr. Stephens's little story in the *Youth's Companion* about "The Old Squire's Book." No man living in this country has done more for boys with his masterly pen than the boys' old friend, C. A. Stephens of Norway, Me. Every boy who has read the *Youth's Companion* (and who has not?) is indebted to him for clean, sweet reading, full of appeal to make sound, honest, helpful men and women. Dr. Stephens has been trying to get a copy of this Old Squire's Book. He has not succeeded. He tells how the old squire happened to write the book after he was seventy years of age—and of course everyone who has read Dr. Stephens's stories knows all

about "The Old Squire" and loves him. It must have been a wonderful book—a compendium of all knowledge entitled "A Book for Boys and Girls." It told all about the earth and the heavens, every kind of useful information, over 450 pages of fine nonpareil type, printed and bound right near the old squire's home. The old squire wrote this laboriously, much of it wonderfully strong and fine, and issued an edition of 700 copies. It cost him much money. He read the proof, painstakingly, and he drove to the village fifty times at least on matters relating to the book. "I do not believe that anything equaling it was ever done before or ever has been done since," says Dr. Stephens. "It was an education, in itself."

The old squire gave the books away to boys and girls. He always took one with him when he rode about. If he saw a boy on the road he always asked him to ride—this had always been his custom. He was six or seven years, giving these books away. They went mostly to boys. He had intended to keep three copies but he gave these away, the last one to a lame boy.

The other day a member of Congress on the Pacific coast wrote Dr. Stephens asking, in vain it is feared, for another copy of the old Squire's book. "I felt worse at losing that book than anything else," wrote the Congressman. "Seeing the Greek alphabet in that book and reading the selection from Xenophon's *Anabasis* in it, led me to fit for college. * * * One day on my way to town to buy firecrackers, the old squire asked me to ride. He asked me what I knew about firecrackers and that led him to talk about China and Chinese. When we got to the store he gave me the book. I used to spend hours reading it; but I don't think I

ever thought to come to him and thank him for it. I suppose the old squire can hardly be alive now; but if he is, I shall be much inclined to come to Maine on purpose to see him and thank him for that book. I want to take his hand and look into his kind face and tell him how much I owe to him."

I think there is nothing more to be said. One better have a monument like this than his name on the roster of a nation placed there by self-seeking and by wealth.

ON "SHADOWS"



HEY come and go and are very beautiful, in spite of the simile for which they stand. No wall should ever be vexed with designs, for on the plainer surface the shadows may come and go and make their own unique designs.

The design of yonder vase with flowers is finer in shadow on the wall than any tedious device of the shop.

The shadow that I see is like other valuable things—never seen before and never to be seen again. It is mine and mine alone and mystically I can possess it—the flat one-dimension deft thing that moves along with the sun. Though all the room be motionless, it moves and has the suggestion of life, in mere design. It is as vaguely evanescent as the flight of a humming-bird. Why should designs be endowed with half-immortality. Song has nothing of fixity. It is sung and has gone and it is the loveliest of earthly things. I can lie and watch the shadows as creative art, that is made for me and me alone. It is as though I heard the voice of the

singer in the next room or the song of a thrush at evening, and I alone heard it. There is selfishness in appreciation of some things.

Sometimes shadows return. After winter has gone and shadows have departed they suddenly come back again as from roaming. Where have they been? There is a shadow by my bed, that was there last year and has been away. Thus does the vase of flowers play its stealthy game of the year. Thus do the sunward thoughts of the dreamer fly away and follow the sun and come back again. He closes his eyes and sees the crocus stirring under the mold and hears the tulip tell of "time to get out of bed." Shadows within doors are only brothers and sisters of the company of shadows out of doors. Gray days damage them, but they are creatures of the sunshine and hence are like some birds and timid animals that emerge from nowhere only on occasions. All of the world is full of them in sunshine and you do not see them unless you get into the habit of looking for them in sunny days and moonlit nights; and the air and the earth are full of them—atoms of shadow composing the very air through which we breathe. You have no conception of the enjoyment and friendship and company of shadows—so ethereal, gentle, retiring and agile as they are.

Summer time at the seashore, is the field day of shadows. The summer sunshine is brighter there and the air is clearer and the leaves of the trees sprinkle the ground with shadows that are translucent. And the big woods—they have sombre and dim shadows; shadows that creep along with the sun over mosses and over trunks of fallen trees. The loveliness of every shadow is that it yet holds light. It is not a dead thing.

It glows with the light that was. It has mauves, dim reds and afterglows. Everyone knows the big shadows. They enforce themselves like the pageant of a great play; whereas the customary stage setting passes as the average of requirement. For instance, we have all seen the shadow of the cloud over the distant mountain, creeping along with apparent slowness yet with the speed of light, and shadows that run over mountain ponds and shadows that lie on still pools and mirrored lakes with blues and yellows from sky and hills. All of these we know; but so many do not see the shadow of the mid-air falling of twilight; the coming of the quiet dusk; the grays and greens and the ashen hues that are transfixed for the moment on grasses and behind stone walls.

Indoors, out of doors, all hours, moonlight, sunlight, starlight—all have shadows. It is significant of life and the moral is too obvious for platitude. I am talking rather about watching shadows and getting a sort of companionship out of them. Night is but a shadow, the evening a shadow of another flight of the sun. It carries the sun's "clasped shadow," as Alice Meynell says. It is eclipse daily and yet out of shadow is reborn as the young child in the mother's arms the new day of sunshine and shadow—the one to emphasize the other and make it sweet, as pain makes pleasure sweet and pleasure makes pain helpful and good for us.

For, after all, is this not a wonderful world with its contrasts of light and shade. The artist seeks his shadows almost before he seeks his lights. He plays with them. So does the greater Artist, the Creator, play with them and we may lie on the grass or in our room and watch the fingers of God, as they move and make our fairest pictures.

ON "THE LESSON IN THE RAINBOW"



IT IS too bad to monkey with our fairy tales. The horse-shoe over the door costs nothing; never drives out bad luck, perhaps; can be laughed out of court by the realists, but it soothes the feeling and does no harm.

St. Dunstan put it there. This doughty old blacksmith tweaked the Devil who came leaning his arms on the old saint's window sill, thus concealing his tail and his hoofs and undertook to pass an idle summer afternoon by talking sweetly to the saint, of treasures under the rainbow. And the old chap at the forge, just simply "fotched" him with his tongs, held the devil by the nose and shod his off hoof with a red-hot horse-shoe. Hence good luck. The Devil is afraid of horse-shoes and would never pass a door where one were on guard. So much for horseshoes.

As to rainbows! Science keeps on butting in our fairyland. She is a foolish realist, knowing nothing much and trying to rob us of our fourth dimension of dreamland. She never seems to realize, with all of her realism, that she is thinking with an organ that is tinier as to space than a needle point in cosmos. One cannot think of God with the mind of a mouse. And that is "relativity." The rainbow made Wordsworth's heart leap when he was a child and he adds "so be it when I grow old, or let me die." But we are fooling modern school children out of the rainbow, by telling them that it is nothing but light through the prism.

Keats, in his wrath, cursed Newton for robbing mankind of its wonder in the rainbow. Hath the beauty of the rainbow changed? Hath the bow over Noah's ark, lifted to his straining eyes, changed a single pigment in its glory, even unto tonight? Are we doing right by telling school children that it is nothing but an interference in the normal function of the vagus nerve? Why did the Creator set it in the heavens—that someone might stand beneath it and say "pooh; I can make a small one just like it with a watering-pot?"

Why! I have a friend who saw a double rainbow, in Mt. Katahdin. It was on Monument Peak and this rainbow sat in the chasm and it was a complete circle. And he was moved to righteousness and has been a good man ever since, if he were not before. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven and a rainbow was on his head! And his face was as it were the sun; and his feet were as pillars of fire." We watch the Northern Lights, pale green, crimson and gold, pulsating like the pinions of a hovering bird, and we wonder. We are met by the information of our scientific friend that it is an interesting electro-magnetic phenomenon, and we would hit him with a club. We seek the hills and see the golden autumn in the trees—the glory of ripening leaves. Our scientific friend tells us that it is the breaking up of the green cells into chlorophyll and xanthrophyll. We would tweak his nose like St. Dunstan and nail a horseshoe to the devil's hoof.

Leave us with our toys! Or else go along and tell us who made the rain and whence comes the sunlight; and who conceived the cell and who devised the articles

that you designate with such long names in the body of the little leaf—that, of itself, is such a cause of wonder.

No one has told us “why.” Science tells us of the wheels; but not of the clock-maker. Science tells us of the reactions but not of the agent. Science takes no stock in purposes. Science tells us only of results. In reality, the more science, the more wonder. And wonder is nature’s primary message to us—the most wonderful of all our attributes of celestial suggestion. It is the new “cell” of man, given him in advance upon animals. The farther we go with science the deeper the mystery of everything. It is like walking the dim trails of deep woods with the occasional sunlight through the branches. Tell me why the worm builds a house of gems upon his back to protect himself from the predacious fish. Tell me why we should distrust any primal emotion, or any agency of aspiration—science, philosophy, religion, so be it they minister to our love and interpretation of nature.

So! We come back and stand under the rainbow—exactly in the center of it as John Burroughs so stoutly maintains. Its bow was set in the heavens as covenant that never again should the earth be destroyed by flood or ever again any of the laws should be suspended or abrogated. And whenever a cloud shall come over the earth and things be dark, the bow shall come and it shall be a reminder of the compact between God and the earth.

And that covenant is in the law of the refraction of light, in the flush of the skies when the Northern Lights waver and rustle through the skies in their golden colors; when the leaf blushes itself to death; when the rock falls from the cliff to the tarn and the seas come

up and die away as drawn by the pale horses of the moon. In short, it is a part of the covenant that this world is run by law and law alone.

ON "HAIR AND HEADS"



IT APPEARS that men become bald because they do not exert themselves to be otherwise. All life secures automatically what it requires for business. Arctic animals are white because snow and ice are white and animals must be white, to hide against the background and thus get their prey. Fish in subterranean waters lose their eyes because they do not wish for eyes.

With man it is a sexual affair. In early days when women wore fewer clothes—and that was going some—their hair was their chief glory. Take Eve, for instance. If it were not for the hair that flows so abundantly about Eve, at least in portraiture, we might be ashamed of Mamma. The prehistoric ladies had no gew-gaws, bright ribbons, high heels, silk hose, peek-aboo waists, short sleeves, short skirts—nothing doing to mark the line between sight and fancy. So they featured the flowing hair. It was done to attract man. With the birds and some animals it is different. The male has to attract the female and so the males are decorated. It is all a matter of wishing and having.

Some of these who try to explain why men go bald and women do not go bald, feel that if men would only wish a little harder for abundant tresses, they would be able to have and to hold hair, on their heads. They even go so far as to say that if men set about wishing

continually and feeling the need, for instance, of another eye in the back of the head, it would grow. It might take a million years or so, but it would come. The cell that would create this eye, or an extra set of ears or a smeller in place of the great toe, would come, just as one really required them for safety and progress. This cell business is a positively new thought. You can explain about anything on the basis of a new cell. Think hard; start a new cell into activity and lo! we have new powers and may see beyond the veil. It is a useful thing—this complete sell, I mean cell.

But that has nothing to do with hair. Women have abundant hair because from infancy they consider it an essential. A woman never ceases for a moment to take care of her hair. She brushes it; anoints it; marcelles it; waves it and does it up. It is the "desire" that does the trick. It is the same sort of cell-action as that which puts the tail on the peacock. It is what makes the fine spun gold on the pheasant's wing. If a man really had to go in search of a woman he, too, would have to do his hair up and put rats under it and stick it out over his ears. He would no longer be the silver-plated receptacle of inadequate brains that he now is. He would not display his solid ivory as now. He would be her-suit!

Some people say that the cause of the loss of man's hair is to be found in wearing of hats. But women wear hats, also. They wear them more than men—sometimes. If the hat is especially pretty, a woman wears it all of the time. There are thousands of bald-headed men who do not wear their hats more than an hour or so a day. You can't blame it on hats. Some

people blame the loss of hair in men to the frequent cutting. There may be something in this. The germ may thereby find its way more easily to the cuticle of the human cocoanut and thereby also the more easily permeate the husk. If men let their hair grow without cutting it might become long and lovely, who knows. It surely would be a great help around the shop.

This is no new topic. It is even treated scientifically. Some folks are congenitally bald and the doctors with their usual levity call this hypotrichosis congenita. If you are bald before you are fifty, you have premature alopecia. If you get bald when you are old it is not so bad; it is only a case of calvitium. All baldness is due to seborrhoeic eczema. I throw information in that you may know profitably that when you begin to grow thin and anxious on the top of the head, you have a regular latin-trouble. The life of a hair is six years. Then it falls. A man sixty years old has, therefore, had ten sets of hair. Interesting, is it not? A wholesome person sheds sixty hairs a day. Sixty new hairs spring immediately into place and say, "I am ready"—even when they are not reddish!

I am giving you all of this information, gathered with great effort, all for the regular price of subscription. I am telling you that if you will start out your boys the same as your girls and get them to brush their hair every night and morning and never wet it uselessly and do it up in a net nights and never have it shingled and have it neatly braided and tied up with a red ribbon as they go to school they may have fine long hair on their heads all of their lives and may thereby become great actors, injun doctors, philosophers and poets. And it occurs to me that if we all unite and wish real hard we may have hair that we can take off nights

and put on days. And it occurs to me that this might come in process of time and wishing, to be appreciated and estimated in fact and fashion as far superior to fixed and immovable hair—the kind that moveth not a hair's breadth, and jotteth not a tittle, and that falls in sixties, frequently "like sixty."

ON "A TALK TO CHILDREN OF ALL AGES"



SUPPOSE you know about this animal that I propose to make the subject of this natural history talk; but perhaps you have not always considered it as closely as you should and it will do no harm to take a few moments to look at it as it appears to some of those who have studied it.

This animal is very common and very tiny. It is of a deep vermilion color and has a quick and darting movement. Few other animals are as agile as this one. It can turn and twist on itself; dart in and out of its cage; bend itself double; stretch itself out of its cage and often can rest motionless for hours, in its soft and warm bed. I suppose you have seen millions of them; observed them as they eat; watched them as they worked; and wondered at their strange ways.

The home of this animal is in a dark cave. It is set about with mounds of almost impassable defence. Its door is caged with bars of bone and ivory. It emerges when it has work to do and only then. It is a lonely animal, only one of them in a cave.

Every child has one of these animals. It is sometimes so gentle that the child does not know that it is an animal. It can be the sweetest thing in all of the world, soft, cooing, purring away or singing to itself. It has the most wonderful power of speech. It can make almost all of the sounds of nature. It can make sounds that no other animal in nature can make. It can weave into lullabies the mysteries of sound and can follow the impulses of the spirit of the child wherever the child may lead it. It is a most obedient animal to the will of the child—some of the time, especially so long as it is properly disciplined and made to obey. When it is taught to be kind and decent, good and affectionate, tender and considerate, it is a most wonderful little animal. It is a perfect pet about the house. Everyone loves it. It can win its way into a cosy place in anyone's heart. It can sing itself into oceans of love. It can make the world about it dance with joy. It can whistle and sing and send dancing feet and flying curls through the sunshine of any home. There is nothing that this little creature cannot do to make itself and others happy. It can lead men and women to be better fathers and mothers. It can make other children happy and joyous. It can influence everything about it, even kings and queens and other great and influential people.

But let this animal be taught otherwise; let it be led by passion and anger and it is a tiger. It is the most dangerous and poisonous thing in the world; it can dart out of its cage, and strike to kill. **It can upset** homes; discourage tender and fond parents; destroy the most desperate and powerful ways of doing evil character; and spread poison all about its way. It has

and venting its spite. It can even carry about envy from place to place and leave it where it will grow into discord and make people unhappy. It can tell lies—one of the easiest things it can do. No other creature in the world can tell as many lies as this little animal when it is not properly disciplined and led and taught. It can tell little half-lies so skilfully that its owner sometimes thinks that they are truths. It can also, I am ashamed to say, be profane and vulgar and go about reeking with filth. It can mock age; laugh at suffering; and blaspheme the Most High. It can hurt the poor by making mock of their garments and can cry “ha! ha!” when it sees others in pain. It can gossip, softly and secretly, in whispers, and spread thus its awful poison over happy homes. It can be an ungrateful little beast. It can be envious. It can be unchivalric. It can be low in its company. It can be as wicked an animal as it is possible to think. And yet all of the time it is under the complete guidance of its owner, if he will but give it proper attention.

If only children of all ages would consider this little obedient animal belonging to themselves and would guide it more safely, what a world of trouble would be saved.

The tongue—an unruly member! Not at all! The most tractable, the most wonderful of all the members! It marks man’s supremacy over all nature. It can say such wonderful things! It has such a power over life! It has such a song and such a laugh and such a crooning. All that it requires is the restraint of the well-ordered mind. The teaching of a conscience and the little animal will be very good and useful all the while.

But left to itself! Uncared for! It can destroy peace, happiness, business, home, father, mother, brother, sister! It can even make God miserable!

ON "RACE SUICIDE"



I HAVE unquestioned record of Madame Frescobaldi who was the mother of 52 children. She never gave birth to less than three at once. I have no record of greater numbers simultaneously. Madame Frescobaldi unfortunately did not write her memoirs. We could hardly expect her with a family of fifty-two around her. She probably was frequently pressed for time as it was. Fancy fifty-two pairs of children's shoes in front of the fireplace of a night. Fifty-two pairs of trousers, or of dresses or of what not disposed about the place.

You say that this is long ago. Permit me to call to your attention Lucas Saez. He lived in America up to 1883. He then decided to return to Spain with all of his children and children's children. Plainly, Mr. Saez desired to make an impression on Spain. He took with him, for an excursion as it were, 37 children, his eldest son being 70 years old. In turn they had 79 children. And in turn these grandchildren had 81 children, making a total to the final generation of 197 children, of whom 107 were males. Possibly they had a brass-band, a baseball club, and a labor union in the bunch. We hope so. Hail to the chief!

Of course, if you will accept old records as authentic, there is Rev. Dr. Erskine of Scotland. He

lived in 1760 or thereabout. He was father of 33 children and the mother doing quite well, thank you! Rev. Dr. Erskine never wrote his autobiography. It would be well if he could tell us how these children turned out. Usually they turn out well. They furnish a sort of community of interest and boost each other. They also learn sacrifice and patience and the art of surrender. They make little Rotary Clubs of their own. They live on the plan of profiting by service for others. We would like to know about the Erskineses! Too bad history is silent.

Fedor Vassileff of Moscow who died in 1782, was the father of 83 children according to the official files of the vital statistics department of Russia. His first wife contributed to his happiness 67 children at 27 happy festivals. When Fedor went away to work of a morning leaving a family of anywhere from fifteen to twenty, we will say—referring to his honeymoon days—he never knew what might be the case on his return. His wife might have had five or six children during his absence. He never knew what was going to happen. Let him count them in the morning and unless some of them got away during the day, he might have another bed-full at sunset. It got to be a habit with Fedor. His second wife had eighteen children, just to show that she could do it as well as some others and when this unusual activity in Fedor's family came to the attention of officials and the Czar pensioned him he had, as I have said, 83 children and only two of the lot had died. One can appreciate the sigh of relief when the news came to Fedor that he was appreciated—elsewhere.

There are a few minor champions, such as David Wilson, who died in Indiana in 1850, who was the father of 47 pledges of affection; and Mr. Greenhill of Langley, who had 39 and who could not have been the person named in the poem, "there is a green hill far away," for he must have remained about the house most of his time to take care of his flock. Mrs. Virginia Neal has been mentioned as a candidate for the haul of fame. I have forgotten her record; but it was worthy, something like 38 or 40 little ones, all of whom looked "just like father."

This leads to the consideration of the beauty of the life of old-fashioned large families on the farm. It was a big family of boys and girls and they had a house full of children, a cellar full of grub, a barn full of stock and hearts full of general domestic love. The mother moved around like a guardian angel. The father was a stern disciplinarian and read the Bible nights while he drank cider to keep him awake. He taught the boys work, worth, thrift, sacrifice, service. Each boy and girl helped the other. One got a job in town and brought another and looked after him. They became a very influential lot of men and women. I can see that family dining-room and living-room of nights often in my memories. The big living-room table with its lamp in the center, a red table-cloth on it, and around it all of the boys and girls studying and ciphering and conferring. The division of work was rigid. All was run like an army. The influence was fine. The results were admirable. The modern way of one child ruling the household and envious of all the world beside did not obtain. It is to be commended to the

attention of modern life. And when cost of living gets back to simpler things and life resumes on the farm, we may see a return of the times when each farmer supplied his own help.

ON "CLEARING OFF AFTER STORMS"



WHEN the old world is all white in winter and the night has sobbed and stormed around the eaves, it is pleasant in a country home or in some remote place in the woods to arise in the dawn and see the first faint beams of the sun come streaming in at the snow-decked pane and watch the light steal over the hills.

The snow is piled up in little mountains and foothills on the sills and all of the paths to the spring or the well are leveled even with the snow around it. It is always glorious to see the carpet of white stretch away into the horizon and it is incomparably fine to see the trees burdened with the unaccustomed flakes that have swept in upon them in the night but which they are built to carry, especially the palmated evergreens that have resistance to vertical pressure built into their very beings. Who designed the evergreen to carry weight? Who built the pine to live in north-land and the spruce to carry itself so proudly wherever it may be?

Some storms have sunlit and smiling clearings and some have rough and sullen clearings and some decline to clear at all, but hang about scolding and making the

world miserable with their rudeness and their irreconcilability. We have in mind some of those old blusterers, that are just like some people, never willing to quit storming. They blow and blow and keep the high spots smoky with the clouds of snow and ice. They fill the roads as fast as they are cleared. They drive the snows into the ditches and wreath them over the stone walls and whirl them across the ponds and build terraces in the pastures under the sedate old trees that have seen this stormy chap, the north wind, before and are not afraid of him. Then the sun is gray and the sunsets are wild and the nights are chill and there are loud sounds of cracking timbers. I never hear one of these nights that I do not think of the story of the great frost in "Lorna Doone," when the great trees in that country split with the frost and went off in thunderous tones in the night. Then I pull the bedclothes to my ears and rest in warmth in safety from the cold.

Nature has a way with her — a mood of the seasons. She usually does as she says. If she starts out with good-natured storms, she keeps it up and for that season, at least, she lives up to the promises. So this winter, of 1920-21, all storms have had these pacific clearings. The sun has come out and it has been warm and all of the pageantry of this beautiful world has been ours for the asking. We have had dawns of soft snows on the trees and fence rails, in which the fox-tracks in the snow told all the tales of the joyance of the nocturnal animals out in the soft, warm snows playing the game of life. We have had dawns in which the world seemed all decked up like a wedding-cake, all ready for some bride of youth and beauty. We have

had dawns in which the world has seemed to be fairly rollicking in her glee, sunshining herself like a bed of diamonds on the bosom of a princess. She is a real lovely old world if she tries to be and she tries sometimes, especially in a Maine winter.

God bless us! How proud we ought to be of Maine and New England where we have at least two kinds of weather and then some odds and ends that make you like the regular kind all the more. How we ought to praise the Lord, for these hills that are like all of the jewels in the book of the apocalypse. How we ought to get about in the dawn and worship the land of snows because it is so cold and pure and fair to look upon.

I could make moral precepts out of this if it were worth while—this clearing off so gently and sweetly. I could say that in some households it were quite as well for husbands and wives who have stormed and howled and made confusion like unto the blizzard in the home, to call it off after the spell is over, after the areas of low-pressure are at an end or moved elsewhere, and break all at once into sunshine. It would be almost worth the storm. But these households where the storm never really clears off, where there are grayness and gales and sullen skies and sobbing in the eaves and corners, and tears that fall like rain, and cloudy faces, and no end of seismic disturbances—these are the households wherein the moral of the present winter should be made. Let the storms clear off into radiance and still glory of a better day.

ON "REFORMING AS A BUSINESS"



AM for reform—of the other fellow. It is the fifth largest industry now organized in the United States. It is surpassed only by the steel and iron industry, lumbering, beef and pork packing and the printing business. If it keeps on at its present rate of increase it will soon surpass pork-packing.

When someone discovered the "masses," a few years ago, the business took an enormous boom. Hitherto, we had endeavored to deal with neighborhoods, communities, vestries, wards and villages. Then the masses, toiling and otherwise, were discovered and the business of reform began to have a national growth. It is now the wonder of the age. We are being reformed by machinery, systems, and schedules. They are reforming our manners and our microbes. A person cannot even have a few harmless germs about him without someone knocks at his door and asks him to run his tongue out and report on his blood-pressure. I don't dare to mention a futile stomach-ache for fear of being ordered into a compulsory surgical operation for appendicitis. And I like my appendicital apparatus. I want to retain it.

But I approve of it—for the other fellow. My mail this morning aroused me by inquiring "how many times do you bathe per diem? When do you brush your teeth? Do you approve of the Shepherd Towner bill?" I don't know who pays for this; but it is a fine business for someone. And it will do the masses so much good! I am for it, of course. I believe that we can

reform the world if we only spend enough money to keep the professional reformers at work. Then by degrees when we get them all reforming each other and the number grows so that we can suspend all other business and attend strictly to reforming, why, dear friends, something will happen. I don't know what it will be; but it will be something awfully nice. And the only unhappy persons will be the reformers, who have nobody left to reform, except themselves.

I used to think that the better way to go about reform was for each person to begin on himself. But I see that I was wrong. We must have several things beside that, evidently. We must have an organization with headquarters in Washington, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Pittsburg. We must have a \$50,000 man at the head. It needs a \$50,000 man, at least. Then we must have literature, a speaking bureau, women to canvass and publicity agents. It is a great out-door sport. And all of the time I was thinking that it was an in-door duty. The next definite step is to besiege Congress for one hundred million dollars for a department or a bureau of a department at the very least and a thousand clerks and a lot of furniture. Then the reform begins and after that all we have to do to make us feel good about it, is to increase the appropriations every year and add the expense to the income tax, to the excess profits tax, and to the tax on hats, neckties, pills and purgatives. It is just as easy as can be; and all of the time the masses go on developing new business for the reformers. Every day, the masses study new deviltries for the reformers to reform and so it goes in endless chain. It is marvelous! It is the wonder of the ages.

As I said before, I used to think that if every man began by reforming himself according to the Ten Commandments with a determination also to keep his bowels open, eat sparingly, go to church regularly, and live within his income, with one wife, we should have need of fewer laws. But, every day, I can see that I was wrong. The old-fashioned method leads to disregard of the "common people." I never met any common people, but I suppose that there are some. They all seem as uncommon to me as do the violets on the mead. But I hear about them every now and then, if not oftener.

"I am for the common people," say the reformers. And they are! I have no doubt about it. But I should want to have a chat with their wives first before I was sure of it. I hate to say it; but most of the reformers who are concerned only in the common people are no more interested in them than some others who do not protest so much. We "common people" resent the classification. We don't want anyone going about with a bleeding heart on our account. We want a square deal, fair play, justice, opportunity, reasonable seclusion from governmental interference, a chance to work, a chance to sleep, a chance to pray and a chance to play.

In short, if about nine-tenths of the reformers would go to work, rear children, pay their bills and try to secure for us the freedom to work out the problems of the world as individuals, not en masse, we should probably do quite as well as we are doing now. And in all this, I exclude charity and education. These are another thing than social reform.

ON "RESOURCEFULNESS"



HAVE BEEN reading a story about a book agent who used to take the elevator to the top floor of a building in which signs were posted against peddlers and book agents, and work down. When he was apprehended and fired out he would take another elevator and go up again and again work down. He worked one factory that way for four weeks and got a foothold there so that he has been permitted free access to it.

This is a true story and I happen to know the book agent. He has made a success of his business. This is a rather extreme example, not to be commended exactly; but all the same it gets one there.

Down in the wheat pit in the New York Produce Exchange years ago, during the height of the "wheat corner" precipitated by James R. Keene in which that daring speculator lost about \$7,000,000, was a young messenger boy named Frank Kirby. I read about him in a little trade journal now before me that, as the corner began to crumble and the brokers to call for additional margins, Kirby was sent to Keene's office for checks to cover. Some of these checks amounted to \$600,000 each. Keene handed them over with no more perturbation than he would a quarter.

The Great Bear was cool as a cucumber—never batted an eyelash—took it as part of the game. Tomorrow or next week it would be different—he would get his.

"Keep cool—don't get discouraged—fight on," he seemed to say to the boy.

Fifteen years later, the boy—now a man—started out to put an ointment on the map known as Palmer's Skin Success. Outside of the limited clientele of a stationery store in Nassau street, New York, no one had ever heard of this ointment. An old Scotch sea captain had brought the formula to America and given it to the stationer. It had a few testimonials and Kirby was out to get it a wider market. I reckon it would make your eyes glisten to read how Kirby shipped \$500 worth of this stuff to Pittsburgh; followed it by train; sold it from store to store and delivered it on his shoulder. Nothing ever phased him. He chased from town to town, Chicago to Terre Haute, paying his expenses as he went along and sending what he had left back to the factory to keep it going. For fifteen years he combed the country and in that time the home office had to remit him but \$200. He never found fault. When other salesmen began finding fault with the house for not sending the check, he would smile.

Once he got into St. Louis with \$1.50, but he dug out. Once he arrived in a big town with nothing to pay his hotel bill. But he never let go. He started for San Francisco, buying a return ticket so as to be sure of getting out. Ahead of him he shipped a carload of his ointment. He had that faith in himself. The earthquake struck and his carload of stuff was just outside the zone. It was what was needed and he sold it to a fine old company doing business in a shack. In 1919, this company sold over half a million of their products through this man's resourcefulness. And this lad is vice-president of the company and on easy street.

Self-reliance and resourcefulness are a great team. Jay Gould was once entertained on Schuyler Livingstone's yacht, before Jay Gould had a yacht of his own. Gould got paint on his broadcloth suit and Livingstone bought him a pair of overalls to wear while his trousers were being cleaned. There was some joking about it and while Livingstone went ashore at Peekskill, Gould left them and went ashore and sold the overalls for two shillings. It made Livingstone laugh and made him think. They tried to get even with Gould so they put up a job on him when they landed him to compel him to swim ashore in his suit. Instead, Gould stripped down to his scarlet underwear; waded ashore with his suit on his head; dried off in the sun; donned his clothes and with a laugh on Livingstone took the train.

He saw the day when he could buy and sell Livingstone and all of his capacity came from resourcefulness and self-reliance. He could sell rat-traps, sun-dials and leather goods; or railroads and steamship lines. Buck up!

ON "WOODCHUCKING"



VER in Augusta the other day, one of the state officials who used to live in Bowdoinham recalled to me the fact that once when I lived in that town we had a dog that dug out woodchucks, and then I remembered.

The dog's name was "Leo." He was a black and tan of current breed, such as runs in a town, and he was one of those vigorous and worthy dogs that, by growing up unassociated with other dogs, far from the madding crowds of other friends, became notional and peculiar. In fact, he was the peculiarest dog, in some respects, that I ever saw.

I will not dwell on any of his peculiarities at this time, but will only close my eyes figuratively and think back to those days when barefoot boys trailed that dog over the tree that had fallen by and across the brook, thence up the intervale, over the road-bridge, up the tumbling water-course that then whitened the path between well-cropped meadows; thence into the woods, thru the woods into woodchuck land.

I never knew why we had to go so far. We were not particularly concerned in hunting woodchucks, but like many other persons in later life whom I have met, we naturally wandered into the old, old ways, day by day. There was a long line of stone walls drifting over breezy hills. There were red roses clambering over them, or growing by their sides. There were glimpses of a running brook and of a distant water-course far away to the west. There were pine trees that sang and soft winds that lifted the damp curls

about our brows. And we were barefoot, as I have said, and Leo trudged alongside, with apparently no regard for bird or beast or other thing—a well-behaved and circumspect boy-dog, a perfectly good canine.

But—all at once, how many times I have seen it—the hair on that dog's neck would bristle; he would throw his old gray, black and tan nose into the coming winds; he would stop with his legs as stiff as a poker, and we would then know that Leo had smelled a woodchuck.

I don't know if you ever assisted a forty pound dog to dig out a woodchuck or not; but if you have not and have no knowledge of the music he makes; of the dirt he flings; of the desperation he evinces; of the gradual disappearance of his forequarters as he holes out; of the agitation in the hole; of the dog's frantic emergencies from the hole to breathe and scratch his nose free from the imprints of the chuck's forefeet—you do not know what may be fun, or would be fun if you could indulge in it.

Why! The way that dog goes into the land would make a well-borer envious. He would finally disappear almost altogether. He would howl and yell and make the strangest cries. He would be agitated on by our eager advice; for the game gets as exciting for men as for the dog! And finally when he comes out with a bunch of fighting woodchuck in his possession and gives him the final slat that breaks the connection between the vital and the past, there is a flutter of dog and fur that surpasses description.

This Bowdoinham friend of mine says that once he had a pet woodchuck, that his father had brought him from up in the farther country. He was taking him

down the village street with a strap around the neck of the woodchuck. Suddenly there was a flight of leaping dog; a scurry of woodchuck; a mix-up of boy, strap, dog and chuck; and when it was all over Leo had another woodchuck on his record of deaths.

My grandfather tried to console the boy for the loss and agreed to dig him out another; but grandfather was no woodchucker. He was a better promiser than performer in that respect, and, besides, he was an old man at that time.

We never ate woodchucks although they were supposed to be good for the minister's dinner. The world has gone around many a time, since then, and I suppose that dogs still hole out woodchucks and that the roses still ramble and the winds still blow and the stone walls still drift over the hills. Leo is no more, but there may be other dogs. One thing has gone, however, an evanescent thing that pertains to the boy—the care-free pursuit of whatever adventure might come when he went out with the dog and with no other purpose than to find the ultimate worlds beneath the afternoon sun—this has gone. I know no way to regain it—except by memory.

ON "HAVING THE LUMBAGO"



ANYBODY can have it, I suppose, if he tries. He can have mine and keep it as long as he likes; or he can pass it on. I have no further use for it.

The lumbago comes like a robin on the lawn. You look out of the window—no robin. You look out of the window again—several robins, all looking as though they had been there for a week.

So with lumbago! You are sitting at the table and wondering what makes you feel so good. Then instantly after you are sitting at the table and wondering if you will ever be the same man again. It is just like that. Suddener than an old maid's first marriage proposal.

I have had the lumbago over a thousand times in my life and never got really acquainted with it. It never killed me—as you may notice—but I have often wished it would. Painless death is a boon. Death by lumbago! Ye gods! But then, nobody ever died of it. He only ached and ached!

The beauty of lumbago is its infinite variety—if it has any beauty. It is far from a plastic disease. It leaves you as it finds you, transfixed, I mean as you were. It is an as-you-were disease. If you happen to be bending over tying your shoe—and this is a fine way to contract lumbago—and a flock of lumbago happens to be flying along and happens to nail you, why there you are! You have to serve out that trick of lumbago curved up in bed like an interrogation point. One time I was here at my desk and I leaned over to pick

up a copy of the Revised Statutes of Maine that was lying in its usual place in the waste-basket, and the lumbago took me. Indeed, several lumbagos took me, front, back and sidewise, and I had to walk home with the Revised Statutes and the waste-basket in front of me, so as to keep from scratching my nose on the sidewalks. I better have stuck my toe in my mouth and rolled home, only I feared that the crossing cops would arrest me for speeding. I have walked a hundred miles back and forth from this desk to my home, bending over like the Man with the Hoe. I have been seen on the streets in attitudes that baffle description and that have aroused grave suspicion as to the workings of the Maine liquor laws, all on account of lumbago.

Once in my early experience with this singular ailment, I was sitting at the table at home and stretching out as a man has a right to when he is alone. I sought to squirm out from my posture without using my hands on the arms of my chair and the lumbar muscles broke and I smiled and said "Ooch." I was younger then and not so familiar with the disease, known variously as a stitch in the back or the lumbago. I went over to the office and sank into a chair. There is a funny thing about my type of lumbago, it is all right when you don't try to bend it. Bend my lumbago and it shrieks; leave it alone and it is peaceful. So I sat that day at my desk at work. My posture happened to be just on the radius of the curve of the no-lumbago and nothing shrieked. Lumbago grows rapidly worse until it gets better. When I tried to go home that night it took the whole office force to pry me out of that chair and get me into my coat. They could not get me into a cab; because I refused to let them roll me head first like a

barrel. They could not straighten me out to fit a street car. They could not get me into a wagon because my face struck the fender. They could not get me into a Ford because the rear door was too small. Finally, they laid me on my side in the tonneau of a patrol wagon and took me home. My family would not believe for days that it was a harmless disease.

I had as soon lie abed with the lumbago as not. If you are careful you can find a position that is painless. You can read and smoke; think and dream; have your food brought; eat anything you like; doze away the happy hours with your back plastered up and your days rolling on peacefully. You have a perfect alibi. You can NOT get up. No use to discuss it. You are frozen into that position. Why worry. The longest and happiest rest for me, that ever happened in my house, was when I had two weeks of the lumbago.

But the darn thing does not take you in bed. Once it took me on the way to New York. I happened to be standing up at the time. I was able to walk absolutely rigidly erect, but not to bow to the ladies or to cavort much of any. It was on that occasion that I acquired all the reputation for dignity that I ever managed to get—away from home. I know a man who traveled selling candies to miners. He had the lumbago more times than I. It would take him anywhere, in the back, in the neck, in the foot, in the mine, in the hotel. It made no difference. But he has outgrown it and so have I—we both trust. He is likely to have better reasons for his trustfulness than I, because he is 78 years old and I am younger. We shall feel sure, both of us, when we are angels. They surely could not have it—and fly.

ON "FACES WAITING AT THE WINDOW"



VERYBODY smiled and many persons waited and looked a while, some even loitering about the gateway and calling persons' attention to it as they came along.

It was not much—only two small boys with their bibs on looking out the window, down the long street, waiting for dad to come home from work.

Their bibs indicated that they were ready for the noon meal—we eat dinner at noon, in Maine, as a rule—and their bibs also indicated that they were not more than five years of age. One, in fact, was four, and the other was three. Two girls, of about ten and eight, were in the background. Four of them—rosy, healthy, red-cheeked, looking out of the window, waiting for dad.

"By jove," said several men who came along as I was loitering looking at them, "you can't beat it. Look at that youngest boy! Ain't he a buster! Bet he'll weigh forty pounds. Nothin' finer anywhere than a lot of youngones. Druther have 'em than a million dollars."

A schoolmarm, whom I happen to know, looked at them less enthusiastically than some of the rest of us. She had a rather weary look in her eyes as she watched them. The smaller boy was pressing his nose against the pane and flattening it out of perspective. "Fine," said I tentatively, standing around to get impressions

for future use. "Ye-e-es!" said she rather gray and drab-like. It was a drawing in of the breath; a "yes" that is inhaled, as for relief, rather than exhaled for belief. "They are lovely, I think; but I—I could get tired even of orchids."

A woman who works in one of the shops came along and said as she looked at them, "Cunning! Guess my youngsters are hungry waiting for me, too. I've two of the nicest children on THIS hill." Declared opinions on comparative children are never "copy," so she passed on and smiled and waved a hand to the two boys, still pressing their noses against the pane.

The ice-man who came down the hill with a clatter of wheels, seemed to know the boys. They seemed to recognize him. Up and down they danced and banged the window. The ice-man laughed all over. Good friends, apparently. Probably they have talked politics or boy-stuff together in the backyard this spring. Maybe he is one of those men who know what a small boy would care to talk about—squirrels, perhaps; or maybe the information eagerly sought that he had run across a black bear as he was driving his ice-cart over beyond the "heights" the other day. Maybe they have organized a bear-hunt for "some day."

A dad who has a window full of youngsters waiting for him to come to feed, has a responsibility and a happiness. He will see them afar and wave. He will do a fancy step or two on the walk when he sees them and they will convulse with glee—dad IS such a funny man. He will pretend not to be able to see them when he gets into the house and pretend to hunt for the clinging arms and the belligerent poundings on his anatomy. He will wonder if dinner is ready; just to be assured.

He will boost the youngest into the air and catch him.

It is not so much what he does—if only the youngsters really do wait for him. The dad who has youngsters who do not wait for him and generally want him to come home—boys or girls, it matters not, the way of life is the same—has something that he ought to think about.

Of course, dad has the best of it. Mother is often an old story. She is not in the window. She is in the kitchen. She and the school-marm both inhale their “Yesses.” Dad is a change. Dad is a new thing. And dad does not want to take himself too seriously. When the pinch comes and there is a choice between the services of the two—mother wins. But that has nothing to do with the case. If you are not awaited by the child you should look into it. You are not making home over and above happy.

And what is there for you, if there be not joy in your train around the house. What is there in it for anyone if you are a dark cloud from which children flee! Come on, youngsters! All of you, old and young. Make merry around the Tree of Life. It is bright; full of lights and joys. The children wait. The firelight gleams. All is peace.

ON "ADVICE TO REPORTERS"



ONE time a great many years ago, Mr. Blaine spoke at a public meeting in Maine and I was there to report him. He was then a candidate for President of the United States and his words were worth a dollar and a quarter apiece, if not more. It was difficult to get within hearing distance of the great man, but being small, squirmy and persistent I forced my way through the crowds on the fair ground where Mr. Blaine was speaking and got a position.

It was all over and I was sitting in the room reading over the report of the speech which I had written. It was in the forenoon and my story of the scene and of the speech was going along in a few moments, when a stir around the building was followed by an impatient and impetuous courier who said: "Mr. Blaine is looking for you. For God's sake (and the sake of the country also, I suppose he meant to add), you have not sent the story along without letting him see it."

I have no objection to mentioning that this ardent courier was Mr. Manley, then national committeeman, and a power of political and business acumen. I was timid and stammered my thankfulness to both the Deity and to all of the Republican Party. I had not sent the story along. It lay before me. And in, very soon, came the mighty man to sit at my humble desk and con the manuscript which was written in my rough and ready chirography; for it was before the days of typewriters, especially portable ones.

Mr. Blaine was a very handsome man. He had the whitest of hair and an ivory tinted complexion—a sort

of pallor of the student; although he was more a student of others than of books. He also had a wonderful gentleness and consideration for everyone. I reckon he saw that I was bashful and embarrassed. He took my writing and (with my permission) began to look at it, remarking that he always wanted to know what was to be printed, especially when he spoke informally as he had spoken that day. "One should always see what is written about one's self."

So we sat down at the same desk and he took out a lead pencil and began to go over the story. He was an editor; one of the early Maine editors; one editor, by the way, who did not win. I can see him plainly enough making his corrections on the manuscript, smoothing out rough places; for I had tried to take him verbatim, easy enough, as he was a most deliberate speaker.

Finally Mr. Blaine passed the manuscript back, after a quarter of an hour of erasures and corrections of form, and then he leaned back in his chair. They were waiting for him outside, bands blaring and politicians carking. But he did not hurry. For a time he looked at me tolerantly and then he said: "I have not found any errors of importance but rather errors of exactness. Let me tell you something to remember all through life. In all of your reporting of the speech of others, endeavor to say not simply what the speaker said but also to say it a great deal better than he said it."

I cut loose after that. I have written since then, into speeches of the distinguished, harmless things that they never dreamed of. I have tried to say what they have said and to say it better and then some.

This is no boasting; for believe me, it is easy, especially when a poor man is stammering and forgetting his verbs. You know what he wants to say; say it in words of one syllable for the poor man. I have joined together ideas in the holy bonds of rhetoric for men and women who never knew the offspring until they read it and then they have said: "I was going well when I said that, was I not?" Chief Justice Peters of Maine appreciated this favor. I once dined with him where another Justice of the Court, now dead and far happier, I believe, reproached me for some harmless-enough stories that I had written about him. The Chief twinkled as only he could and said: "Don't be hard on the newspaper boys, judge. They are good boys. When I was in Washington, in Congress, they used to report my speeches. I really got most of my fine vocabulary from reading what they said I said. Damn sight better than I could do, judge."

But then. Terrible things do happen to speeches. The abruptness with which some of these reporters make a person pass from idea to unrelated idea in paragraphs, reminds one of the Alpine goat leaping from crag to crag. My advice to the young is therefore as Mr. Blaine put it—report what the speaker said; say it better than he did, if possible. And by that we both mean, "smooth it, smooth it!"

ON "EATING YEAST"



HAVING accepted no retainer from Fleischmann and having no purpose either to advocate or to discourage eating yeast, I propose only to put the topic before you and let it rise.

There was a time when a person who ate a cake of yeast would expect to die, bubbling, ballooning toward the zenith. I recall when mother made "emptings" bread; keeping the crock on the mantel over the kitchen stove covered with a plate. The "emptings" were made of a modicum of ferment to which were added now and then the bits of flakings from dough, the tiny scrapings of the mixing-pan when making bread.

This material would ferment, "rise," overflow the crock; run down its sides to the plate in which the crock was set; standing there day in and day out, frescoed with streamers of white like stucco. When mother made bread she took some of this "emptings" for yeast. It made the best of bread. It was sweet and pure. The emptings had a slightly acid taste and "bubbled" in the crock. It had a good flavor.

Once I ate a lot of it, to the consternation of the family. No one had hitherto eaten "emptings," seemingly. I recall how they eyed me, plainly expecting some phenomenon not hitherto seen in the household. I had a notion myself that I was doomed to go off the face of earth in a tremendous explosion. I feared also that sprouts and stringers like those on sprouting potatoes might come out of my ears. I went out and leaned over the pig-pen and talked to the hog, doomed

to early death like myself, a habit I had when despondent, and told him what I had done, bidding him beware of gourmandizing. I expected to inflate and float. I expected that I might grow—literally “rise,” like a loaf of bread, to enormous height. Nothing happened. The family waited expectantly for their rather diminutive boy to expand like Humpty Dumpty, sitting on the wall. They poked my abdomen expectantly. I sat on the doorsteps and gloomed, full of emptings and forebodings. My brothers advised me to eat flour and make bread, internally.

I did not know that I was forty years ahead of time. I was “vitaminizing”; that was all. The “emptings” may have made me “winter” better; which was the chief consideration in those days; how may a boy “winter.” Did your cattle “winter” well?

Today they eat yeast-cakes for the complexion; for corns; to make the hair curl; to ward off appendicitis; to lengthen the eyelashes; to improve the disposition; to strengthen the mind; to calm the temperament and to help one estimate his income tax.

We are wards of “Vitamines”—minute guardians of robust health, resident in uncooked cabbage and yeast. We have merely grubbed along in the dark for 240,000 years, “vitamineless”; now the knowledge of Vitamines A. B. C. is the electric torch along the way. We fortify ourselves against premature age by spreading crackers with Fleischmann and eating them as one formerly ate his crackers and cheese.

The other day I was on the dining-car of the evening train out of Portland, Me., standing in line waiting for a seat at table. Next to me were two young

women also waiting. Back of them was a line of twenty more. It was first come, first served.

Suddenly one of the girls said: "Gracious, I forgot my yeast! I've got to go back and get it and I'll lose my place."

She went back and got it and we kept her place.

"Do you think it is helping my complexion any?" asked she on her return. "How could it?" replied the other girl ambiguously.

Occasionally I can feel those vitamins stirring in me, those that I ate, fifty years ago. I am sure they do me good even now—especially that I have just discovered that they were good for what ailed me, no matter what it might have been.

ON "THE MAINE OF 100 YEARS"



T WAS all here, a hundred years ago, when old Peleg Tallman called to his wife, "Aunt Betsey, bring me my cowhide boots. I'm goin' to the General Court and make a State." It was the same soft song of pine in the winds and the same sweet rote of the sea upon the shores; and the tides, drawn by the pale hand of the moon, came up out of the mystery and swept dark and white into the same recesses as they do now.

We live very little as a state, in a hundred years. A few folks come and go and a few names are remembered, to no great purpose, and a few more white stones stand for a little while in the long grasses of the summer-time fields; but over the face of the earth come very few changes. A town may come here and a town

may disappear there. A river may eat its way into the meadow. A mountain, like Katahdin, may drift away a few of its hexagons. We may fret a river with a dam. We may cut a highway through the wilderness. We may fell a great many of our trees. But at the heart, under it all, beats something that we never have estimated at its worth—the integral earth, the forces of nature, the undying life that springs from the native soil of a State.

All of the newspapers that took the occasion of March 15th, 1920, to sing songs of praise to our land of the pine, overlooked something that we Maine-born folk rather cherish; and that is a belief that we somehow partake of the soil. It is impossible that a person, born where blue hills lift and where rugged seas beat, and where islands sleep near and far, and where there is music in the pines and spruce and dreamful hours under the crimson canopies of autumn forests, should come up out of the soil like those who are born in flat-land. The desert does not produce the oak and the apple, but the palm and date trees. You do not find rushing, eager waters in equatorial lands. You do not find harbors and conflict of seas, and men and women a-sea in tiny boats and feeling safe in the hand of the Lord, in those lazy lands where the seas come not nigh. We are a rugged folk. We have a land of winter. We have a school of old-fashioned hardship. We have the virtues of self-reliance. We have sympathy with the hills, whence cometh our salvation. We know the silences of our lakes and the throb of nature at eventide when the ripple sings on the shingle with the steady beating of the minute-hand of nature. Never heard it! Don't know what I mean!

Never heard Nature breathe, as breathes a giant asleep! YOU are not from Maine!

It is well to think over the past of Maine. There have been fine men and women, here. The hundred years that we have fretted it, with our little lives, have been kindly; and the sweet old state, smiling in the fastnesses of her lakes and through the clefts in her hills and over her mountain tops, probably feels that we have been very good children. But the eternal does not fret! The eternal goes on and on and on. The summer comes to this favored land of ours as to no other. I have tried to tell of it again and again. The winter sweeps her as it sweeps no other. I have tried to tell about it, peering in through open doors to fire-sides old and new, sacred with memories and blessed by happy hours. It is this that I would talk about this hundred years of Maine. Maine the eternal! the gift of the very gods to a favored people. The finest land beneath the sun. The abode of comfort, ease and plenty. The sweetest neighborhood state in all the world. The loveliest in winter, the richest in spring, the most paradisaical in summer, the most gloriously beautiful in the autumn. I am ashamed to say all that I could say about Maine. One should not "cut loose" and indulge himself about Maine. He should be reserved and careful and then he will be needing adjectives at that. Maine the beautiful!

The hundred years of Maine have been sympathetically lived by us who have partaken of its life, and have not forsaken it; who have understood it and not belied it. I see not the great who have passed out into larger life; but that succession of the plain, steady, simple folk, the mothers and the fathers of us; the

quaint life; the eager town-meeting politics; the fisherman's dory far out at sea in the gathering storm; the shipmasters, the ships; the rocking forest and the woodsman's axe; the old home and the mother in the doorway; the schoolhouse in the dale; the log-driver and the leaping trout; the evenings by the fire, the scholars by the evening lamp.

Again I smell the apple blossoms and I kiss the earth of Maine!

ON "SAP-BOILING TIME"



IT IS about sap-boiling time. Pretty soon we shall be thinking of those times when we put on snowshoes; went up over the ridge to the sugar orchard and began to have real fun. What an epic in the lives of old-fashioned New England boys! Talk about modern materialism and the demands of the proletariat. They never can and never may know the mental, spiritual, physical uplift of one of those clear mornings, with God's very face shining into ours; with the smoke of the chimneys of the town rising against the morning sky—youth in our hearts and spring in the air! Ah me!

I do not know why people turn away from such things to the town, to sit in the movie house when up here on the high hills are such glories! "The fresh land rising from the snow, reminds me," said Thoreau, "of the isle, which was called up from the bottom of the sea, which was given to Apollo. Or, like the skin of the leopard, the great mother leopard that Nature is, where she lies at length, exposing her flanks in the

sun. I feel as though I could land to kiss and stroke the very sward, it is so fair. It is homely and domestic to my eyes like the rug that lies before my hearth-side." So we see it; as, in the mind's eyes we are again boys, journeying over the hills, to the sap-orchard—the bare spots showing here and there; the soft south wind a-blowing; the water sibilantly singing under the snow; a persistent "drip, drip" from the tree and a honeycombing of the snows to the south of old bowlders and lo! sweat under the hat-band.

There was ever a tree brushing the roof of the old sap-house as it stood against a bank for the saving of wall-space. The rustle of the leaves was sweet music; the dripping of the water from the eaves, a lullaby; the odor of the steaming sap, an incense. If you have ever sat yourself down of a spring morning after making your way thither and looked it over—the long sweep of the hillside, through the bare, upstanding maples; the ice-bound brook at the bottom of the hill; the whole world at one's feet. A goodly view!

If you bruise the tree's side and its life-blood seems to come with a gush you know then it is indeed spring. You know nothing like the first drink of the maple sap. It has a woody taste like the taste of a fresh chip that you have chewed contemplatively, ere this. It is some trick to tap a tree. No amateur does it well, at the beginning. The flank of the sugar-maple is as hard as a rock. But it can be done, as well as some other things.

I never think of sugar-making, but I think of the struggles of old-time boys for cash as profits of the venture. Things were very different, were they not, when boys had to undertake business ventures of their

own in order to get the money for schooling. I can remember the early walks over the pastures to the sugar maple lot. I can remember the exhilaration of the work, the fun that was mixed in with back-aching toil. And I always recall the story of the old-time boys who with longing in their hearts for larger returns coveted a six-dollar sugaring-off pan which tantalized them in a store in the distant town. Six dollars was as the treasures of the Ind to those boys. But one day on the way home from the "lot," they saw through the breaking ice a mink disporting on the bank. One of the boys remained in concealment and watched the mink, and the other hurried home for the old family gun.

I have heard the man, grown to riches and good estate, tell the story many times of the tense moment when it fell to him to level the gun at the mink, still nibbling away unsuspecting across the way. His hands shook; his eyes dimmed; his heart throbbed; his breath came in quick, spasmodic inhalations. If he missed, all was at an end; if he hit, there was money in it and hope for business expansion. He fired and the mink keeled over. They skinned him; stretched and prepared the skin and sold it for exactly six dollars which exactly paid for the sugaring-off pan and exactly made their venture into a profit.

Far from me to attempt to retell the familiar scenes of the camp behind the bluff facing southward; of the chill nights; of the long evenings; of the visits from the girls; of the happy and the toilsome hours commingled into the memory of old New England days. There are memories of golden moons upon the snow; of swift rivulets growing in the meadows; of familiar

odors that seem to come back out of the past, again borne on the nostrils as of the earth and the fields. Another spring—each of them numbered, and ticketed! And then perchance spring eternal!

ON "THE FIRST CROW"



PERHAPS he is not the first crow of spring but the first caws of spring. I hear him every year, on some March morning as I lie in bed, a distant cry, far up in the sky and away off as though winging northward with the almanac. I turn on my pillow and look at the ceiling and it retreats into a canopy of leafy branches and limpid sky and I seem to hear the sea beat on rocks covered with sea-weed and to watch soft days come and go.

I say that he is not the first crow of spring because he may after all be the last crow of winter living on the clam-flats by the sea. They have done such things—though probably not this winter, for they are wise birds and have powers of augury of unseasonable winters. But he is the first crow to me. And never for many years have I failed to hear that distant distinct caw out of the unknown saying "Spring."

Yesterday I heard him and he is here. Several have seen him and one man has shot him—monstrous thing to do, it seems to me, to shoot the first crow that comes over crying "Caw-w-w." Just for that no man should shoot the first crow.

But this man did. He told me about it today—as happening at his summer camp at Lake Tacoma,

which is near this town. He awoke in the morning of Saturday last and though it were the 20th of March, the very almanac of the beginning of spring, the day of the vernal equinox and the trumpetings thereof, the winds howled and the storms raged and the blizzard did its will. Around the northeast corner of his house there was a wailing of gales. The trees shook and the windows rattled and yet the next morning there sounded the voice of the crow.

This man is a practicalist in nature. He knows all about crows and their depredations. I know only that sound out of the sky, saying "Caw-a-daw!" and the fading roof and the budding summer in my mind's eye. For me to shoot it, would be to shoot Spring in the stomach and disembowel fair Endymion. But for this practicalist of Nature, who knows how to snare the trout and where to lure the bass, and how to find the rabbit on the snow, it was a matter of apprehending a robber. Poor old crow, just out of a morning, saying "caw-w-w" by way of encouragement to society. God made him to rob early birds' nests. God made him black and shiny and gave him a keen and alert mind, with which to beat society to a finish.

So this man, who is my friend, took down the old double-barrel 10-gauge and loaded it with an antique, black-powder shell. And he poked its muzzle out of the kitchen window and the crow who knows the muzzle of a loaded gun from the muzzle of an empty gun fled. He never would have come back again doubtless but smoke was rising from the lonely man's chimney and neighborliness got the better of the crow. And the man waited, never moving, and the crow came back to his tree and again ventured to proclaim himself as

the harbinger of the vernal crisis. Caw-w-w! It was his swan song. The old 10-gauge spoke; the black powder shell exploded with a roar like a big Bertha and the man behind the gun awoke, so he says, on top of a red-hot kitchen stove, his gun in the wood-box and his rear supporting infantry badly scorched.

Later, the man went out to look for the crow. Not a feather; but a little farther on, the crow head down in a snow-bank quite dead. And later he is to be hung in a corn-field to frighten away his family when they shall have come in such numbers that one death or more in the Corvus crew, will never bring out any obituary of mine or of any one else.

And yet—and yet! He was an early bird! He was the first voyageur up into our lands of promise. He must have had some peculiar claim on life! He must have been an extraordinary crow. He must have had a heart of sympathy for our long hibernation. He must have felt for us septentrions. He must have been wiser than some other crows in everything but his estimate of the man who lived in that particular house under the spruces. Possibly he was an idealist among crows—somehow feeling that as he alone brought the message of relief, he would be immune. I only hope that the time may never come when this friend of mine, marooned in ice and snow, seeing no hope of the sun's turning north, may wait in vain for the crow's note—or hear it only in ghostly mimicry, from the soul of this murdered crow that was the "voice of Spring."

ON "GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL"



SUNDAY schools are not what they used to be. To begin with, they used to be "Sabbath schools," and the "Sabbath school" library used to be full of moral literature. I remember some of the books that I used to go up and draw—"Robert Ronald or the Tale of a Good Boy;" "William Ashton;" "Dare to Do Right, or the Story of James Brown." They were liver-colored books with confidential communications on the fly leaves warning us as to their contents—"This is the worst book I ever read." It was all the realism that the books contained. I understand that now a boy is liable to draw Sunday school books like this: "Cow-boys of the Wild West;" "The Boy Wireless, or How Dick Saved the Navy;" "Life in a Tank, or the Adventures of Jack Harding." Good gracious! When I was a boy, if you saw the name "Tom" or "Dick" or "Jack" on the title page, you just knew that the boy was a bad one; missed in spelling; went wrong and failed to experience religion before the age of ten crime-soaked years. I can just SMELL those old Sunday school books. They just stunk of piety. We hated 'em. The only good book in our Sabbath school library was "Ivanhoe"—and they didn't know it was good either. If they had, they wouldn't have let it in. They ruled out Horatio Alger and even Elijah Kellogg's "Elm Island" stories, while, as for "Oliver Optic"—his books were not permitted, because they were not founded on facts—like "William Ashton" I suppose, who died of piety and pulmonary troubles none too soon.

All the religion I ever got as a child in the Sabbath school was through my feet. I usually got new boots and a new suit of clothes about June, and, of course, that stimulated the folks to send me to Sabbath school. I felt hot and my feet swelled and I was wretched and in no mood to absorb much religion any way and what I did get came by suffering. There would be about a half dozen boys in my set, who went through this experience, and we always hid our William Ashtons under the church steps and took off our shoes and fled for comfort right after Sabbath school. So that in my memory of seeking spiritual comfort all I can remember is hot, stuffy clothes and aching feet. It was a terrible cross to wear boots in those days. The teachers never understood what made us fidget so and shuffle our feet in the Sabbath school. But I knew. You have got to understand boys. Now if they had begun teaching us about the apostles whose shoes were removed and whose feet were washed, we might have been interested. I tell you this—you can't study boys too much. If they are restless there is some cause, other than lack of religion. Their minds are very busy as a rule, scheming or pining for this or that. What they want, they want mightily, and naturally it isn't found in Sunday school unless you put it there. So if I were going to teach a class of boys, the first thing I would do would be to ask them if they were itching anywhere (say, up and down the back); then I would like to know if their shoes hurt; and then if everything was all right I would start out and tell them some sea stories about Peter—fishing nights, miraculous catches, wallowing big nets full, walking on the water by Peter and others, spies going over into the Promised Land and

seeing giants forty or fifty feet tall—(make it any size you like) ; some of those snappy fight stories in Judges; story of Lot, the bum nephew of Abraham; work up a climax on Lot's wife and illustrate it with a sample of rock-salt; get their opinions on Jonah and the whale (their opinions will be quite as valuable as yours) ; and play up Goliath strong. Don't forget David and Goliath! As my dulled recollections brighten I do recall that I learned about "Goli-ar"; for we used to play the drama, staging it under the old oak tree on Curtis's Hill.

Of course, never having taught a Sunday school class of boys, I don't know whether I could pull off a hair-lifter every Sunday for fifty weeks in the year and incidentally work in a modicum of spiritual pabulum with it, but I believe that there are those who could. Instead, they used to make us learn a verse from the Scripture; sing "Shall We Gather at the River-v-v-er; the bee-you-tiful, bee-you-u-u-tiful Riv-er" and take home a copy of that sprightly weekly publication "The Myrtle," as proof of having gone to Sabbath school.

It is suggestive to me, therefore, after many years of absence from Sunday school, to go back again these days and see the rows of interested children—their feet fully accustomed to shoes; their little backs encased in silk underwear and not prickling with old-fashioned red-flannel or no underwear at all; their big eyes looking straight ahead and to hear the interesting discussion of sociology and the Bolsheviks. It is very interesting to see trained choir-leaders and watch children march in disciplined step and hear them deliver ten

minute addresses and feel that they know all about the fundamentals of Christian living.

We have, therefore, come along—judging by me. I suppose that I had a vague idea of some Christian essentials when I was ten years old, but I didn't get it from "William Ashton." Perhaps I got it from Beadles' Dime Library, which I read, as issued weekly. At any rate, I did not swear, or lie, or steal; I spoke respectfully to my parents; I never sasssed my elders; I never broke any of the ten commandments, of which I was perfectly well informed. So I suppose I learned all of this in this Sabbath school. And if so, and through my feet, all I can say is that it went the route if it got to my head. All of which ends as it should by advising you to send the children to Sunday school and go yourself to see that they get there.

ON "THE CHIMNEY CORNER"



LD TIMER,—I wonder what you think of most often as the years lengthen and the days draw nigh when there is no pleasure in them. Is it not the old folks in the chimney corner, way back in some old New England farmhouse?

I speak of chimney corner figuratively; for most of us now living have no clear conceptions or memories of an actual chimney corner in those days. Stoves had come in abruptly along about the time of our early youth, say along in the fifties, and they had driven out the old fireplace rather rudely. Fireplaces in the "settin-rooms" were faced with a sheet-iron contraption and pierced by the funnel of the air-tight, even in the land where sweet, fair-heating and fragrant white birch wood was to be had for the hauling.

The chimney corner of which we think was almost always in the kitchen—big and fine, yellow-floored with a roaring cookstove eating up the wood, wood-box behind the stove, long, smoothly painted, and just big enough for a little lad to curl himself upon, and toast like the dog and the cat, that usually crawled up with him and disputed for comfort.

I can see the old folks now, grandfather and grandmother, sitting by that central heat, talking and smoking—yes, both of them smoking together their evening pipes. The braided rugs lay evenly on the floor. The old, tall clock clicks away in the corner and utters every now and then strange internal rumblings and premonitory warnings of intent to mark the hour. The

table of the evening meal—for we all ate in the kitchen in those simple days—is pushed aside and covered with its red damask company cloth. The old case of books shines in the lamplight and shows Josephus, the Bible and the 10,000 useful recipes of Dr. Pierce, all in a row. The almanac hangs on its appointed hook and woe to him who failed to restore it thereto after using it. The pantry shines with its rows of milk cans and its gleaming pewter. The fire roars through the little openings of the draft and the wind of winter wails over the hills and far away.

Somehow, after all, this appeals to one who sees the quieter and more serene intent of life. There was peace, at least, in this evening scene. The children were not scrapping over the movies. The daughters were not bothering to go to some dance where the fret of life and the appeal of the unknown disturb their studies and vitiate their purposes. The study books afforded about the only relief from the monotony of the chimney corner and the evening callers were almost always sure to come stomping in with slates and pencils and the old Greenleaf's Arithmetic for a bout at the old mysteries of the grindstone problem. We may well believe that these boys and girls, thus brought up to expect little from exterior life; to find in neighborhood and the chimney corner the inspiration and the source of hope and human love; to believe in themselves and not copy from others and imitate the eccentricities and the vices before they imitate the virtues and the self-repressions, would develop a sturdy manhood and womanhood and go out into life better equipped than now.

We may be wrong. But the voice of the chimney corner is potent. It calls on us to believe in the simpler life. It asks us to honor the home and respect the father and the mother; it senses the protection that went with the roof of home over the head, the good-night kiss, the fond hands of mother tucking us in with the sweet good-night. How many boys and girls get that now? How many would accept it now? How many would fail to resent it as an intrusion? How many mothers would bother to give it? But you and I know of old-fashioned chimney-corner mothers who never failed to see boys and girls tucked into bed; to pass along in the quiet, darkened room and whisper a good thought as the hands of mother pressed to brow.

I wonder if it is better now—boys and girls romping away to chop sueys, dances, movies and joy-rides and coming home when they please. I wonder if we are producing better manhood and womanhood **than** when the chimney corner had a place in our lives **and** home was something more than a boarding place and parents something more than easy money.

ON "SULPHURANDMOLASSES"



CAN FIND "sulphur" in the dictionary, but I can't find sulphurandmolasses. But as the water begins to run into the gutters and I can hear the robin on the lawn, I can find it in memory.

Sulphurandmolasses was an old-fashioned spring lifter for boys. It was supposed to eradicate the winter humours and put pep into a lad who otherwise seemed to have nothing in him but the odor of winter woolens. Take an old-fashioned boy who had wintered in his clothes and not been introduced to the bath-tub for seven months on account of the bath-tub being frozen up back of the kitchen ell, and give him sulphurandmolasses in tablespoonfuls, three times a day and two at night, and you could get lint out of him that had been ingrained there since long before Christmas. It is a natural squeegee. It will force more wickedness out of a red-headed, freckle-faced boy than three weeks of walloping. It is good for what ails a boy; no matter what ails him. It is a duty well performed—is sulphurandmolasses! It will sweat more Boy out of him than any other remedy known to the pharmacopoeia. I can't understand why they stopped giving it. It was good for the boys of the sixties and seventies, why not now? I don't believe there is a United States Senator aged sixty in Washington today who was not fed sulphurandmolasses. And see what it did for them!

Mother always began it by some sort of instinct. She knew! Along about the time woodchucks began to stir, she began to stir the sulphur into the molasses. She looked us over and she saw that Bill had the snuffles

and that William had the hookworm and Tom had a peculiarly far-away odor of old garments and that Sis was pimply, and so she said, "Tomorrow every one of you children begins takin' sulphurandmolasses." And we did, you bet. What ma said went, in "them days." Applause was light, as mother spoke. We knew that we were quite healthy; and yet there was a sort of hibernating spell on us. We had a lot of winter rind on us. We had bunked close and in our negligee, so to speak. I don't suppose that we would have recognized a night-shirt if we had seen it. Never! Peel off the habiliments of day and there you were. Nix on frills. Sis in the red flannel; we in the dashing garb of nature and the depth of the feather bed. Little he-bears could do no more, not to mention he-bares. So sped winter in luxury of real life next to natur'. Joe Knowles had nothing on us, nights. No more had we.

So sulphurandmolasses was intended to slough off the sloth of the dark period of perfect peace. Mother mixed sulphurandmolasses stiff. She applied it liberally. It was not so bad if you did not think so. There have been worse remedies and a lot that did more harm. It was sweet and sort of devilish. It tasted of Portland Star Matches. It acted as a mind stimulant. You were compelled to show instant improvement or you got squills. Your eye had to be brighter and you had to have instant show of the breaking out of humours from the blood.

That was the thing—the pimplier you got the more good it was doing you. I have seen boys fed on sulphurandmolasses, so broken out that they were simply lovely. So hubbly and romantic looking—just as though they would be a whole lot better after they got

over it. We always felt when taking sulphurandmolasses as though evil were shooting out of our pores at the rate of about ten evils a second. I reckon that I got infection out of me when I was a lad, and that, too, solely through the agency of sulphurandmolasses, that if left in me, might have made me a bank-robber.

There is much more that I might say. But I refrain from committing myself to any general endorsement of the remedy as of the present. I suppose that children are different nowadays. I don't suppose that there is anything in one of these modern angels comparable to that which broke loose in the spring from old-fashioned boys and girls. I suppose that the dear, impalpable, disinfected and antiseptic flesh of today's immaculate darlings would not respond to sulphurandmolasses as it did in the springtime of auld lang syne. I don't suppose that you could drive any bad humours from the modern blood of youth. Lord knows whether there are any such in 'em or not; I don't. But I know that in the olden days by the time the mayflowers bloomed and the boys and girls had been given their spring bath in the blue tub and the sulphurandmolasses eczema had scaled off and the bluebirds were winging and ma had put away the sulphur bag for another year and we were wearing camphor bags against scarlet fever and greased up against the itch, we were pretty frisky boys and girls. So here's to ma! and the spring housecleaning of the boys and girls!

ON "HAVING A SYSTEM"



HAVE a system—a filing system, that depends altogether on a wide-mouthed steel contraption with many divisional compartments, each compartment alphabetically marked and set off by nickel trimmings. As I look at it now in the gathering twilight, it gleams at me like the aperto ore of a hungry alligator.

It was given to me, or rather forced on me, by a member of our office force, who has become discouraged. It is her duty to clean up my desk, once in each six months, whether it needs it or not, and she has felt that my frequent and inconsolable tears at the discovery of unanswered correspondence and in some cases unopened correspondence far beneath the layers of newspapers, books, manuscripts and clippings, might be alleviated if not altogether suppressed by this contrivance, for immediate filing of all matters of importance. So I have a system, at last.

For instance, if I receive a letter from the Congressman of our Congressional District whose name happens to be Wallace H. White, Jr., at the present time, I can at once throw it into the proper compartment and forget it or not. I know where it is. If I should be so fortunate as to receive a letter from the Governor of our State whose name happens to be Baxter, I can likewise distribute that with a flip as firm and sure as that of the railway mail clerk, of the U. S. Postal Department.

Then when I want to refer to that letter of Congressman White, I can look for it under the W's for "Wallace" or the C's for Congressman or revert to the

W's again for "White" or look for it under his wife's name which begins with "N." When I want to find the Governor's letter for any particular and pressing reason, I am sure to find it under "B" for Baxter, "G" for Governor or "P" for Percy, which happens to be his first name and the title by which I always call him. When I want to file a report on Taxation by Stetson, I can file it under "S" and look for it under "T." When I desire to refer to the future of the Androscoggin Bar Association with reference to a recent issue between them and Lawyer Crockett, I look for it under "A" for Androscoggin, "B" for Bar and "C" for Crockett.

Now here is a case. The yawning jaws of the "system" caught me with a lot of data on a certain Squirrel Island Semi-Centennial soon to be given at a famous Maine sea-girt isle. I could not file systematically all at once so I filed them as I had time. As it happened in my system, I filed a lot of them deep into the caverns of this Efficiency Tomb, under "P" for pageant which happened to be an outstanding feature of the anniversary, similar to the Plymouth Ter-Centenary pageant. Then the next time I came around to it, something in the condition of my mind emphasized the Island rather than the pageant; so I filed a bunch under "I" for Island and plunk, they dropped into the abyss. Then later, feeling the need of concluding the matter of filing, I filed a bunch under "S" for Squirrel, and these also struck bottom. And the next day in a moment of temporary aberration, I filed a series of articles for the same purpose under "Q" for Squirrel, and there are many under "S" for semi and "C" for centennial.

I know a man who has a system of filing. If he wants to file a clipping he files it with cross references and puts a card into the cabinet with every one of these various titles capitalized saying see "under X" or the letter where the article may really be found. He can find an article inside a week every time. This man has ten or eleven of these cabinets. When he wants to run down a clipping he hires a detective, puts roller skates on him and then has daily reports of progress. System is one of the best things I know of. There was the old story of the man who was kicked down seven flights in an office building, by a series of efficient floor walkers, who said that he didn't like the hospitality but darned if he did not admire their system. System has helped a lot of firms to carry on a moderate business at great expense. The ordinary use of a complete System is to be able to know a lot of things that you never would care to know at only moderate cost for the information. For instance, if you wanted to know how many postage stamps were used in the week of July 15th, 1916, in your business, it might be possible to get the information and compare it with the present trend of correspondence. System could be invoked that would give a complete record of the amount of ink used in the business office over a term of years and compare it with the spots on the sun, as well as on the office floor. System is possible of infinite variety. And nothing is so liable to eat off your head. There was a chap who was doing a good business with three men and making money. He kept his accounts himself in a simple way and always knew what he had in the bank and what he owed. He hired an efficiency expert; put in an adding machine; a comptometer; a dictaphone; two stenographers; five roll-top desks, one of them covered with

glass and carrying a bouquet culled by the stenographer with the yellow hair; hired an invoice clerk; put in a shipping clerk; stopped sacking goods himself to the freight car; devoted his time to computing averages; and now he is working for sixteen dollars a week running an elevator.

I do not advise burying your correspondent under accumulations of extraneous matter; but I can't see much gain in my wide-mouthed contraption that hides my woes yet more deeply. The system I need is this: "Answer correspondence on the day received and file the clippings in a bushel basket."

ON "AN OLD TEXT"



MY TEXT is in the words of Edward Everett Hale.

I am only one.

But still I AM one.

I cannot do EVERYTHING.

And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the SOMETHING that I CAN do.

You may ask why I am always preaching these things. It is because of this text—an old one that has long been familiar. I have felt that the newspaper should carry something that pertains to the ethical, moral and spiritual life—not all news and not all business. The newspaper is not a commodity to be sold over the counter like boots and shoes and groceries. It ought to do something else.

"I am only one! I can't do everything. But still I ought to be able to do something." So on we go as the mood and the fancy strikes.

Many people fail in the world because they think in terms of their own littleness.

Many people could do a great deal more than they think, if they only esteemed the somethings a trifle higher.

Joan of Arc was only one. She could not do everything. But she did something. Savonarola was only one, but he did his bit. Lincoln was only one, but he was not ashamed to do his something.

Mr. Roosevelt said to a reporter once that he could not do anything very well. He was not a good shot; not a good rider; he played a poor game of tennis; he was not a natural genius as a naturalist; he was not an easy writer; he was an average man. "But, by George," said he, "I work at being an average man harder than the average man does."

Nobody ever succeeded by discounting his own paper. We don't bank that way. We can't begin by presaging disaster.

Cecil Rhodes was only seventeen years old when he went to Africa for his health. He was only one. He felt that he could do something—not everything; but because he could not do everything, he did not refuse to try to do his bit. He tried to raise cotton and failed. He went with the rush to the diamond fields and worked. His health was poor. He worked on. He studied nights and went back to England every winter to study. He founded a fortune before he was twenty years old. He never was without his books. He used to say that he felt that it was his duty to do all that Cecil Rhodes had in him to do. He never was known to refuse to help in any cause for public good or to break a contract or in any way shirk the keeping of his word.

There are scores of true stories of how Rhodes took hold of things that others declined. His word was "I'll try." He did not say "I am only one and one can't do much." His word was: "I am Cecil Rhodes and I will do all that Cecil Rhodes can do. I am not afraid because I am only one. I can't refuse to do all I can do."

Cecil Rhodes was only one, but he believed in a world-wide British Empire and before he was twenty-two years of age he had written a will to perpetuate his work to that end. He added enormous possessions to that Empire. He was called the Empire Builder. He never would have a title, the only thing he wanted was a degree from Oxford University. He was all alone when he began to aspire for it. He accepted it when all of England wanted to give it to him and a lot more besides.

You are foolish to think in terms of "only one." Every other man or woman who has gone to the fore, was only one.

You never will get anywhere unless you stop belittling yourself and settling your hash before it is eaten. "I can't do that. I have no talent for that. Others are so much abler than I in that work." This is the bane of progress.

Fear is the bane and antidote of success. Fear drives us to work; fear of failure drives us to doubt. Pride linked with fear is a bad combination. We have ruined too many prospects by casting disrespect on so-called failures. Fear of failure is at the basis of most of this whine: "I'm only one. I can't do everything."

Courage and joy in life are behind the balance of the text. True, I cannot do everything.

But I can do something!

And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

ON "RIBBON GRASS"



IN AN old garden, Sunday, a great bed of old-fashioned so-called ribbon grass that was so common fifty years ago, was whitening a patch of ground. Picking a blade, I stuck it into my buttonhole and went along.

Several persons stopped me and asked where I got it. All of them were of the elders. One lady in a store said: "I have not seen any for many years. We used to braid it and make trimming of it for our dolls' hats and dresses. I used to think it lovely."

So it is "beautiful" taken in the blade; but hardly beautiful as a garden decoration; for it grows scraggly and has no color in the mass—a sort of faded look with a tendency to develop into clumps and mat into unsightly patches. But in the blade, it has a striking variety of combinations of ivory and green running the way of the blade. Many of my readers who have not seen any for years, will perhaps have hard work to recall it to mind. Some of the blades are almost pure ivory white; others are almost all green, but all of them are in the finest lines of green and white, as though drawn by the minutest of ruling-pens in the most vivid of inks,—such is the way of nature.

Nearly everyone who saw it, recalled old gardens in which it had grown and the interest it had for the old-fashioned children—of which more later.

Of course the botanists know what is the name of this grass and how it originated. But most of us do not care. There are 3500 kinds of grasses and one more or less does not matter. They are as many—far more—than the races of earth and the blades of grass each season transcend, in number, the people who have ever lived. They come and go like men and women. Walt Whitman called his poems, on the races of men and women, on the dreams of the past and of the future, on the endless processions coming and going, "Leaves of Grass" and one of his poems he called "Calamus," which is the sheaf-like order of grasses like the flags or the canes, where groups of them live in the common stalk.

This ribbon grass seems like an effort of nature to make the grass decorative; or perhaps man had something to do with it, some old-time Burbank who played with the pollens. Nature made grasses for all sorts of things—grasses to grow in all climates, tropical, damp and sterile, among the eternal snows. The brave grasses are everywhere and they grow to all sizes from this green and tender grass that is native to New England, to the bamboos that are a hundred feet tall. We have grasses that grow in streams and grasses that grow by the sea. Grasses have been devised by nature that will tie the shifting sands together. Some are annuals and some are perennials and some are so made that they extend their roots far into the earth in search of water and tell us where lie the hidden springs. When beaten to the earth by rains they have ways of rising from their prone condition by their own strength. They have ways of storing water and then standing out against drouths. In short, they

have so many characteristics of God's providence that they preach sermons better than some preachers.

I fancy that this grass of which I speak with its stout and tender stems and its gay colors, is good feed. It is of the smallest group of the second series of grasses according to classification—the so-called *plalaridae*, including canary grass, ribbon grass and the sweet grasses. Corn—or maize, is a brother of the grasses, so are sugar-cane, rice, millets. So are oats, wheat, rye, barley and other grains.

Thus a placid contemplation follows the fingering of this gay grass as it lies on the table here as I write. Little old-fashioned children weaving it into ribbons in gardens among rosemary and hollyhocks and other sweet old blooms come into mind. Sweep of green fields and sounds of the scythe come to the senses. Cattle feeding with bent necks and sheep on the pasture lands, with full barns and chimney-smoke from neighbors across wide intervals. The checkered sunlight streams through the old gardens and on the stone-flagging and makes shadows of the apple blossoms gently swaying in May winds.

But, above all, this grass brings to mind the children, and the women as I have said. It was a brave, though fruitless effort to brighten up the corner. It was like planting morning-glories and creeping-jinny in those old gardens. Other things would pass away—these would never die. The hand that put this grass of which I speak, has been still for more than fifty years. The grass endures and comes up each year, waiting for children again to braid them into crowns for their dolls; children that never will give them any attention; children that will never come again; children

that forever have forgotten these scenes, are away in their automobiles. But the grass keeps on waiting!

ON "MY ALARM CLOCK"



HE chanticleer, in the famous play by Rostand, was the self-appointed keeper of the house of the Sun. His, the responsibility of arousing his Lord, the Sun, each morning, lest there be no day. With proud crest and clarion call, he shrieked the warning in the darkness again and again, until at last in obedience to his alarm, the sleepy sun crept out of bed and all was well. The tragedy of assumptions! They are like toy-balloons that float gloriously on their strings, bobbing along with us as we go, until something punctures them! Like the chanticleer, we shrill our cries lest the sun should fail to rise. And then, some day, failing to be on guard, by reason of our human weaknesses, we see the sun yet rise, the earth yet turn; the business world yet continue to function and all the edicts of the All Supreme yet obtain, throughout the universe.

Yet, there is something in the story of the chanticleer that is bigger and better than the regularity of the sun and its indifference to the cock-crow. It is bigger because it is spiritual; not material. It is bigger because it is volitional; not mechanical. And that bigger "something" is keeping faith with our obligations to the world, doing our duty in all things.

I think of each humanly-exercised function; duty, obedience, faith, etc., as cogs in the machine, though it is too mean a simile. Each of us must work; not

break down. Collectively, the guardians of duty, faith, obedience, spirituality, must be sufficient in number to offset the inertia of the undutiful, the indifferent and the unfaithful. If one of the wheels of life refuses to move the chanticleer's call might, if long neglected, be followed even by the failure of the sun to rise from slumber. It is easily conceivable that failure of the spiritual world might occasion the destruction of the material world. So the brave old chanticleer that, with undimmed faith and lusty call, went forth to his post, each dawn, and summoned a sleepy world to its daily duties, and sang out his morning prayer of praise and thanksgiving, and his call to Service was as great in his faith as he would have been had his cry alone made possible the day.

All this consideration comes from the early arousing not of a sleepy sun but a sleepy father, by the hundreds and hundreds of little birds, sparrows, that inhabit the ampelopsis under our windows. The birds are very still of nights. They have crawled into little nests, in the thick, broad-leafed ivy, and here have their families, doubtless their neighborhoods, their streets, maybe their hotels for strangers and I hope their Y. M. C. A.'s for the youngsters. They have my consent to the latter.

At a certain moment before daybreak, they begin to stir. A single "cheep" breaks the stillness; a leaf in the vine stirs, and some old guardian-sparrow of the day pokes out his head from under the leaf that is his own especial roof-tree and sniffs the coming of the hour when day should break. He wakes his wife, maybe. The two—they have no clarion to echo the hills and call forth response from miles away—arouse the

others, for somehow they know that "the day cometh." And, little by little, the leaves stir; the one "cheep" becomes multiplied into many; the "young ones" arouse; the darkness is punctuated by what seems to be ten thousand "cheeps"; the uproar is enormous; it arouses everyone in our house. There is every indication of matutinal discipline in the bird-home. Things are to be heard that indicate that fledglings are being whipped into shape. There are sounds of fulfillment of duty by parents.

And so the sparrow even helps to arouse the world. So, too, he tries to bring on the day. And he is not alone. Like him the birds all sing, like chanticleer, long before the daylight streaks the East. You may hear them in the forests, in the very darkness before the dawn.

Brave little alarm clocks! Just a part of the universe plan, which begins with Faith, moves through Hope and ought to end in the radiance of the sunshine of what we call Love, or God.

We are all in the darkness crying up the Sun. We are all stirring in the streaks of light, in the invisible and impalpable impulses, through the ether of that Other Dawn. We are like the birds, restless and unaware of the reason why. This alarm clock, MY alarm clock as I figure it out by way of analogy, is the same in relation to that New Day as that which stirs the spiritual world—invisible impulses, calls of the Divine for us to arouse; to be ready, to fare forth, our souls on eager wings, to meet the new light of the East, the glory of Heavens that shall mean new duties and broader opportunities for all of us.

ON "AUTUMN IN THE CELLAR"



HERE is something about going into the cellar in the early days of October that gives me a sense of falling of the pylorus. A sinking, all-gone feeling overtakes me and I would sit on the top of the cellar stairs and be one with Thebes and Carthage.

Going into the cellar to look over the furnace and perhaps "start up a little fire" is a twin devil to fixing up leaks in the roof; painting the back-shed; putting out clothes-reels and paying municipal taxes. You get nothing out of any one of them but trouble.

I have just been down cellar. It is all there; only a little rustier; a little more ancient, sordid. The furnace still squats there like an East Indian idol. Its upper doors look like eyes in Buddha. Its coal-hole door looks like the aperto ore of a hippopotamus. It smells like an empty tomato can.

I can understand why Cain killed Abel. Cain **had** to start up the furnace because Abel refused to tackle it. I can understand why Cleopatra embraced the asp. It was fall and the palace-furnace was out of order. I can understand why Socrates preferred the hemlock to the coming of another winter. I can understand why Jonah quit the whale. It had something to do with whale's cellar. Most of the troubles in life have come from cellars—in my opinion. I dislike a cellar more than I dislike municipal politics, and that is going some.

There is something about October 1st that is depressing. It is a lively month on the level; but subterraneously, it is a season of sadness. It suggests winter

underflannels, winter clothing, winter shoe-laces; winter snow-shovels and the cellar furnace. I view my furnace always with despair. It always seems to need new grates; new shakers and new hinges. Disuse gets at a furnace worse than use. After spring clean-out a furnace seems to say to itself "Aha! I will get even. I will deteriorate rapidly. I will obsolesce speedily. I will age exceedingly. I will go back emphatically." And when you slowly approach it October 1st, after a summer of gay life with the bees and birds, there the materialistic world grabs and enmeshes you and oxidation overcomes you, and the rust that corrupteth discourages you.

There is no lesson in life so persistent as that of the ravages of decay. Nowhere does it so enforce itself as in a modern cellar. No, I will not say in a modern cellar—I will say in a quasi-modern cellar. The truly modern cellar is the one that I see pictured in magazines. It is all white enameled tile with an entrance way of arched plastered tile through which streams a ray of sunshine. In high embrasured walls, are flowering plants. This cellar has a library, a smoking room, a moving picture theatre, a cabaret and a comfort station with a four-bed hospital and a police station and a garage. It is all split up into sunshiny rooms, electrified laundries, coon shouters and jazz bands. There is an automat and a phonograph in every nook. There are couches and window seats. In the far corner is a gold furnace, rustless, automatic, unbreakable, self-disposing of ashes, equipped with nickel and gold pokers; diamond handles to the door and jade ornaments—a furnace that shovels its own coal, makes no ashes; saves so much coal that when the winter is

over, you have twice as much as you bought from the coal dealer. In front of it is an easy chair; a box of cigars; a reading lamp; a foot-rest; a bath robe and a couple of Hawaiian dancers doing the hula-hula.

This is the modern cellar that I see pictured in the current magazines. I am going to have one in the next house I build, but at present, I have one much like those that most of us seem to possess, where the furnace lurks like a rhinoceros in the dimness, seeking to spring on you; where the thermostat refuses to work; where the stove poker has spines in them to rasp your tender hands; where the shakers are busted; the ash cans leaky and the coal bin a dark and noisome pestilence.

But—life has its compensations. I build a fire. The smoke pours from every crevice. It floods the neighborhood. It routs the swallows. It chokes my bronchial apparatus. But at length, it clears. It buzzes a bit. The water sizzles. The steam-cocks respond; the heat resumes in the radiators; the cellar warms up; the corners brighten; the despair gives way to cheer as the grate works again and the old last year's furnace gloves, donned with repulsion, become once again familiar apparel.

Thus do we resume. Thus the October cellar becomes a part of the daily round and by and by I linger here; watch the bright eye of the furnace and rejoice in the coming of the days when the snows shall blow, the furnace boil and the good old radiators cheer us on the way to springs yet remote but sure to come. For as sure as I do live and grow wiser, there is good in everything and no joy on the heights would be half so keen were it not for our occasional trips to the depths—

these adventures in the cellars of our lives. For, who-so dwelleth forever on mountain tops knoweth not glory; for glory encompasseth him and whatsoever encompasseth one, he seeth not, any more than the fish that swims sees the seas, round about him.

ON "RIDING IN SMOKING CARS"



T MAY be the time will come when woman may ride in smoking cars.

In fancy, I can see a troop of them pushing on ahead of the men into the smoker, tossing their "bunnits" into the racks; piling their grip-sacks into the spaces between the seats; shouting "another wanted for bridge" and then yanking the old corn-cob pipe out of their reticules, scratching a match on the back of their dolmans and then squaring away for a good time. The fattest woman in the whist party will take off her jacket, roll up her sleeves, boss the game, spit in the corner, keep tally, smoke a cigar with a gold band, coach her partner and stick her pencil over her ear while she riffles the cards. She will let her cigar go out and daintily scratch matches where she pleases and will put the cigar ashes in her lap. She will talk politics between the deals and cuss the administration between her clenched teeth. Then she will look into her hand mirror; pull a puff out of her reticule and powder her nose.

The air will be thick and heavy in that smoker, especially if it be an evening train, with the lamps burning so as to show the smoke. The ladies of the Steam Fitters Union will get on with their dinner pails and

standing in the aisles ask if "Babe got a homer" and "who pitched?" They will all be nattily dragging on their T.D. pipes smoking the "Spinsters' Delight" or the "Lucky Tike" tobacco. They will have their feet on the chair rails ahead of them if they are so situated and they will "borrow the makings" of the train boys, if they have none in their hand-bags.

It will be no strain of etiquette to extend one's acquaintance among the fair sex when the women join us in the smoker, for the fraternity of the corn-cob is established; the equality of all men behind the briar is fixed; any man will give you a match and the cigarette smoker always passes the case or the box as a matter of habit.

All this may be a dream but not so much as formerly. Today, the smoker on this train is rather dark and gloomy with an odor of departed days and nights. It needs something cheerful—sachet and silk. I would see fifteen or twenty dames and daughters sitting on these now vacant seats, pulling away dreamily on their old tobaccy-pipes, T. D.'s, briars, calabashes, meerschaums—especially calabashes. They are so becoming to large women.

Take an "out-size" of calabash for instance (number 11 stout) and let it down under a broad beaver hat, to an ample bust, under which beats somewhere a true woman's heart, and I can think of nothing more inviting to the mind's eye.

Consider on the other hand a young woman, slender, dressed in half a yard of chiffon and three flounces below the waist, smoking a meerschaum, beautifully carved with likenesses of Dempsey and Carpentier in action, and have the stem of the meerschaum trimmed

with sash ribbon to match the hose and I'll say it would warm up and enliven this old car a whole lot.

The trouble with smoking cars is not that people smoke in them. It is because they don't really smoke in them. They chiefly sit about and scratch matches and gloom. They need the spur of society; smoking is a social habit. The smoking car will never be what it should be, the meeting ground of all fumigators, until it is co-educational. We should not permit it to be the school of social etiquette for men alone, where they may spit crosswise; talk about "hootch" and play seven-up and bid-whist for small stakes. It should be open to the ladies, to lead them also up to a higher plane; to educate them in the refinements of expectorant conversation; to help them make home what it ought to be; to keep them posted on the latest stories—in short, to give them happier hours of travel.

Why should women have no recourse to these superior opportunities in this sociological school? Why stay in the Pullman car knitting sweaters and thinking about gowns? Why not come along with us, join the crowd and hear the invigorating uplift of the masculine debates? Why not be a woman among women! Why not! You would as soon do that—would you—as spare your sleepy spouse from his Pullman chair as he goes to the smoking room, wondering what makes the dear man so drowsy all the time, only to hear his merry laugh ten minutes later over the screen of the smoking room followed by his eager voice as he says, "Here's a good one that I heard the other day."

ON "COBWEBS"



OMEWHERE in one of Lord Dunsany's books is a chapter about the end of the world—all cobwebs. The industrious spider, working on and on, prolific, not easily exterminated, springing from corruption, weaving in festoons the final shroud of life. I have not read the book for several years. But it is one of those impressions we get from unique pictures and I have ever since seen some last inhabitant of a dying world, if such there might ever be, going into the house of the cobwebs, past the seven veils, to bury himself in their silences.

You forget anything and leave it alone for a time and the spider is sure to invade it and spin his webs.

The spider is the only thing that spins from his own entrails and gets good results. Man must have material on which to build. He is helpless to create except with materials. The spider is the shroud builder of earth, the last to work; so he **MUST** carry his materials with him.

So, we have to be careful and not permit any of our useful possessions or equipment to be neglected. Nature is remorseless. It takes toll of idleness.

If you leave your sharp axe out of doors, the spider of time dulls its edge with rust. If you leave your farm tools out of doors to the weather, the rust ruins them.

Leave a building for a year or so and the doors begin to fall from the hinges, the window panes become mysteriously broken; the blinds begin to sag; the bricks in the chimneys begin to fall and the chimney itself to lean to the north.

Earth marks with ruin its decay. Use is the only antidote for cobwebs. Laissez-faire is only a synonym for ruin.

This applies to our minds and bodies and our spiritual existence as well as it applies to our belongings, our farm tools, our abandoned farm buildings, the desolate churches in the country, the lonely cabin in the woods.

Someone asks me why Rotary was started and I tell them that one good reason was that it keeps the cobwebs out of the garden of neighborliness. A person asked me why Rotary was confined to one representative only of any given business in a community and I could not tell him any more than I could tell him why humanity was divided into families. But I could have told him why Rotary was started at all.

It was started because we MUST keep the cobwebs off of our humanities; because we must keep using our neighborliness; because we must keep at work at the Golden Rule; because we must express happiness in terms of friendliness.

Otherwise spiders come! Otherwise they will spin about our souls dusty and stifling webs of death. Otherwise they will seal up the doors and windows of our lives. Otherwise they will make us repelling to entrance of sun and the soft, sweet winds of heaven.

It is use that works wonders to keep doors open; windows washed; floors scrubbed; pans bright along the walls; smoke coming from the chimneys; lights in the window for wayfarers across the dark moors, maybe snow-piled or swept by driving rains.

It is work and use that keep the axe bright and the farm tools easy-running and the scythe keen in the

grass and the stubble. You can't leave your possessions out in the field and expect them to be comforts to you.

I know a hotel in America where there are twenty or thirty rich men who sit about the winter fires and are perfectly miserable. They have a round of hotels, that they yearly inhabit. They do nothing else and never did and never will. They are so unhappy. Nothing is bright. All is dull. The cobwebs are there. The spider spins. The dust gathers, there is no light out of their windows.

Friends! The call is not for leisure except in the serene old age after the work has been done and the journey is near the end. The call is for the brisk work in the kitchen and the courts of life, for the brush and broom against the accumulations of inertia; for the creation of something out of the daily toil that tends to brighten the light in the window, for the wayfarer. Pure leisure and doing nothing are but hastening the coming of the spiders that spin the shroud of death.

The human soul needs watching. Despair never comes where the sun shines in upon the clean floor of the mind and soul through windows where there are no spiders' webs.

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